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## CELEBRITIES AND I





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By

HENRIETTE CORKRAN

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## PREFACE

WITH the exception of Balzac and two or three others whom my father came across, all the persons I have written about in this volume I have met. I do not criticise the works of these illustrious people, I simply try to render sincerely the impressions they have made upon me. It is curious that the celebrities I have known in my childhood and early youth are far more living to me than those I meet at present. This may be owing chiefly to my having heard them discussed in after life by my father who was a literary man, and by my mother who had a *salon* in Paris (my birthplace). She was a brilliant talker, and had the power of making the people she admired stand vividly before me.

When I was still a child, Thackeray's delightful personality made a far deeper and lasting impression on me than Robert Browning's, for instance, whom I knew more or less all my life, till his death. Le Comte Alfred de Vigny (author of *Cinq Mars*, *Chatterton*, etc., etc.), is far more living to me than even Lord Leighton who died a few years ago. The shortness or length of particular recollections set down here has nothing to do with the importance of the subject ;

and though now and then I may be a little indiscreet (the public will forgive me, as it generally loves indiscretions), I have invented nothing, and endeavoured to see the best in everyone I have known. I have tried to render directly and simply what I have seen and felt ; and I hope that this volume, more or less a record of my life, will interest and amuse my readers as much as it has interested and amused me to write it.

With the exception of a few chapters nothing has previously appeared. I thank Messrs Macmillan for allowing me to reproduce some reminiscences of celebrities I have known which appeared in *Temple Bar*, and I am under a similar obligation to the Editors of the *Sphere* and *Tatler* as regards a short paper on Ellen Terry, and one on the Brownings at Asolo.

H. C.

*October 1902.*



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# CELEBRITIES AND I

## A MURDER

THE people I met in my childhood are far more living and distinct than those whom I knew in later years ; the farther I look back the clearer I seem to see them.

Looking down the avenue of Life, the earliest event I can recall is a terrible one, *i.e.*, the murder of a friend.

I was quite a small child when this horrible deed took place, close to the house in Paris where we then resided. I remember vividly everything that happened on that particular day, which now stands out from the surrounding gloom with photographic sharpness of outline. The sun shone brilliantly—that delicious Paris sunshine which exhilarates and makes one joyful. I even recollect that I wore a very large hat, one I specially detested, for I had overheard Mr William Thackeray (author of *Vanity Fair*, etc.) remark to my father, when he met us in the Champs Elysées, that I resembled a “walking mushroom, all top, dwindling into a pair of shoes.” As I was sensitive to ridicule, I consequently hated that particular headgear, but as it was new I was made to wear it. I dreaded meeting Mr Thackeray ;

I liked him, for he was always so kind to me, so that I did not want again to hear him exclaim, "Oh, little walking mushroom!"

I was promenading with my mother in Le Bois de Boulogne (an unusual occurrence, for it was my father or our nurse who escorted us children in our daily walks); all Paris was out of doors; there were heaps of equipages, the avenue was crowded with smart women and children. When we were crossing the road, a gentleman, who was riding a brown horse (I remember it was a chestnut brown, and that his beard was almost the same colour as his steed) dismounted, and after shaking hands with my mother, kissed me, which I rather resented; then he walked by my mother's side, holding the bridle in a yellow kid-gloved hand.

How I longed to jump on the saddle and have a ride down the crowded avenue. I loved animals; this horse stepped out gracefully, his coat was glossy, his neck arched, and his mane and tail beautiful. But my equine thoughts were unexpectedly arrested by the excited tone of my mother's voice. I heard her exclaim, "Oh, I beg of you, do not go to their house again, don't be tempted, do leave Paris at once. Can't you go away this very day?" I had never seen my mother so agitated; she placed her little hand on his coat sleeve; they had stopped walking.

I now looked at the gentleman; his face was very pale, his eyes red, they had a strangely sad expression. His hand, which held the bridle, shook violently.

I wondered if my mother was scolding him, and

what he could possibly have done. She again said earnestly, "I entreat of you do not go there again ; resist temptation."

He shrugged his shoulders, remounted his horse, muttered something, but I could not hear what he said, there was such a noise of carriages and horses. The unhappy, anxious look on his handsome face stamped itself for ever on my memory.

He touched his horse with his spurs, waved his hand at me, and galloped away.

We never saw him again.

That same evening, as we little girls were having dessert with my father and mother in the dining-room, the door was suddenly thrown open, and the draught immediately extinguished the lighted candles, leaving us all in darkness. I heard the following terrible words whispered in my father's ears, "Mr F. has just been murdered" (Mr F. being the name of the gentleman we had met that afternoon in Le Bois de Boulogne).

My father quickly hustled us children from the *salle à manger*. I heard him say in a low voice (I had particularly sharp ears), "On no account let the little ones know anything about this tragedy."

My mother threw her arms up, a gesture of despair, and disappeared. I clutched hold of the nurse's dress, staggering out of the room, quite frightened. "Murdered !" That terrible word hissed in my ears, so did my mother's words, "I entreat of you do not go to that house again." I trembled with terror, I wanted to shriek, but my throat and lips were parched. I was in a living nightmare. Who had killed that gentle, kindly man? But,

strange to relate, I dared not ask any questions. I felt that it was too terrible to talk about, so hugged the horrible secret ; but when night approached I had moments of anguish. I pictured the poor man lying on his back in a pool of blood, looking up in my mother's face with those sad, troubled eyes.

My mother never mentioned the subject to any of us children, but she looked worried.

Years after I was told the cause of this tragedy, which naturally had impressed me so much.

The wife of an acquaintance of my mother's had fallen deeply in love with our poor friend. That day when he dismounted from his horse my mother entreated him to leave Paris as she had heard that the husband was getting suspicious. Instead of following my mother's advice, he called at the house that afternoon ; they were caught *en flagrant délit* ; the infuriated husband killed the lover. He was acquitted by the jury.

In my prayers at night for a long time I asked God to be kind to the poor man who had been killed and to see after his nice horse. I wondered how the sun could shine as brightly and the birds sing so joyfully, and the world go on just as if nothing wicked had happened. The people strolled on the Boulevards, and drank *café noir* and lemonade as usual ; the little soldiers and *sergents de ville* strutted about like bantam cocks. What was the great God about to allow such crimes ? Was He sitting calmly up in the blue sky, surrounded by His angels, while a nice man was murdered ? It puzzled me, especially when it was dark ; I would lie awake at night and often wonder



if there really was a God ; and if there was, how could He be indifferent ?

My mother at this time took a deep interest in so-called spiritualism ; I often heard her speak about her visits to mediums and clairvoyants. Amongst the number was the then famous Alexis.

At that early period of my life I was an extremely reserved, nervous child. Unlike my sister, who was, I thought, an over-affectionate little girl, who kissed and made pretty speeches to everyone, I was *farouche*, cared for few, and to those few, though devoted, I was undemonstrative. My mother had a noble character, but she was severe, and when angry uttered sharp things ; so, feeling lonely, I created an imaginary being who dwelt inside the wall of my bedroom. The name I gave her was *Mélanie* ; she was my own pet friend, endowed with the qualities which most appealed to me ; she knew everything that I wanted to know, was my wiser and better self. I fancied that I could hear her voice, especially when the room was dark, and as I was fond of solitude I used to talk to *Mélanie*. It was a relief to my pent-up feelings, for she knew all my thoughts, disappointments, joys. I often fancied that I heard the rustle of her skirts, and the silvery tone of her sweet voice cheering me. She became a real being. Nearly every evening I would creep to the wall, knock, and call out “ *Mélanie*.”

There is no doubt that this creation of mine satisfied a want in my nature. *Mélanie* I believed watched over me, and when anyone was unjust or angry I imagined she would sympathise and give me courage to bear the bitter fears and sorrows of childhood.

One afternoon my mother went to visit Alexis, escorted by our distinguished friend, the author of that great historical novel *Cinq Mars*, Le Comte Alfred de Vigny.

My mother was then particularly anxious about the fate of a friend of hers who had sailed for America ; it was believed that the vessel had been shipwrecked. My mother was taking a letter from this lady, addressed to her, before she started, in order to see if Alexis, by holding this letter, while in a trance, could tell if the lady was drowned or not.

I was highly excited over the affair. While my mother and Comte Alfred de Vigny were absent I paced up and down in a feverish state of mind. As I feared that when they returned I might be banished from the room, I hid myself behind a thick curtain in the drawing-room in order that I might hear my mother relating the result of her visit to the clairvoyant Alexis.

My mother returned late. An acquaintance, an American lady, was waiting for her in the drawing-room. I recollect that afternoon as vividly as the day of the murder. This person, evidently thinking she was alone, was peering about the drawing-room, and to my surprise read an open letter from Elizabeth Barrett Browning addressed to my mother which was lying on the table. My mother appeared soon after and related what happened to the clairvoyant.

Alexis had gone into a trance while holding the letter, which he placed on his forehead, and had told her that her friend's name was *Susanne*.

"That's curious," exclaimed the American, "for it is an uncommon name and not English."

“And,” continued my mother, “Alexis said that he saw her lying on a couch, her head bandaged, as she had a wound on her forehead.”

“I guess Alexis read your thoughts,” remarked the American; “you think she has been hurt, having been shipwrecked. What did the Comte Alfred de Vigny say? He is rather an unbeliever, I guess!”

“Oh,” answered my mother, “M. de Vigny is now convinced.” He asked Alexis while he was still in a trance to tell him anything he saw happening at that moment in Paris. Mr de Vigny had brought with him his servant in order to send him in a *fiacre* to any place Alexis mentioned. Alexis after a few moments of silence rubbed his forehead and exclaimed,—

“Yes, I now see a poor young woman on the banks of the Seine, close to Le Pont Neuf; she wears a lilac cotton dress and a black shawl; she is so miserable; she is crying. Now she has thrown herself in the river, but a man wearing a blue blouse has rushed in and has rescued her from drowning.”

Monsieur De Vigny ordered his servant to hurry off in a cab to the spot indicated by Alexis. In half an hour the man returned saying that when he arrived there he found a crowd, and a *sergent de ville* told him that the poor woman had been taken to a house by some kind lady who was going to inquire into her case. The servant said that Alexis’s description was correct. She wore a lilac cotton dress and a black shawl. “But,” added my mother, lowering her voice, “I want to see the spirit of my poor murdered friend. I consulted a medium, and he tells me that his spirit may visit me; of course, if I saw his ghost, that would convince me

more than anything else that we shall meet in another world those who are dead. Perhaps they are all about us ; but though we have eyes we do not see, or are not worthy of seeing, the spiritual beings who surround us. How it would comfort me to have a message from my poor friend."

Such weird talk naturally made a deep impression on an imaginative child, and I suffered from acute terror. The notion of the spirit, or ghost of the dead man visiting my mother, filled me with awe, especially towards evening ; then every shadow or sound thrilled me, even Mélanie no longer soothed me. I had a deep veneration for my mother's mind ; I knew that Alfred de Vigny was a great man ; both believed, or seemed to believe, that spirits might visit those they had known on earth. It was very awful. I was haunted by the fixed idea that the murdered man's ghost would probably appear and tell her who had killed him. I had dreadful dreams, and walked in my sleep. One night, in a somnambulistic state, I opened my window, and was stepping on to the balcony, when my mother fortunately heard a noise and carried me back to bed. I was screaming, "A ghost ! a ghost !"

I was very ill, and for several days was laid up in bed. The doctor came constantly ; my mother watched by my side day and night, her cool hand placed on my hot, feverish brow. When I was convalescent, I heard the doctor say (he was English) that my little nerves were overwrought, that on no account was I to be told dreadful stories, or to hear anything about crimes, etc., that my illness had been brought on by nervous terror, that I was an imaginative child. He forbade

talks about spiritualism, "bad for grown-ups," he remarked, "and worse still for children." "If there was more common sense in the world, the doctors would not have so much work," he added, glaring at my mother through his gold-rimmed spectacles. "Give her a thorough change, plenty of fresh air and exercise, and she will be all right, as she has a fine constitution."

We went to St Cloud—dear old St Cloud, with its nice *château* and pretty park. The change did me a world of good, and when I returned to Paris a daily governess was engaged. The lessons, especially the multiplication tables and grammar, which I detested, drove away the remembrance of the murder, and ghosts were banished from my thoughts.

## MR BROWNING, FATHER OF THE POET, ROBERT BROWNING

SOME of the happiest hours of my childhood were then spent with dear old Mr Browning. He loved little children; he himself had the simplicity and guilelessness of a child, and its indifference to pecuniary advantage. He only cared for money in order to buy old and, if possible, rare books. He was always hunting through bookstalls on "the Quais" in Paris. When he bought a book (generally a very old one) he added some pages of blank paper; those he filled with chronological tables or such other supplementary matter as would enhance the interest; this was written in a clear, bold hand. He delighted in drawing genealogical trees; he would find out the genealogy of all kinds of past and present remarkable people. The Bible and history generally he seemed to know by heart. He was so credulous and so simple that his daughter, Sarianna, who was a rock of common sense, only allowed her father a few coppers daily for pocket money.

I remember one afternoon Mr Browning disappeared; no one had seen him since breakfast. Miss Browning, who had been spending the day at our house, grew very anxious and nervous, for her father neither spoke nor understood French, and never knew his way about, not



having the bump of locality. My father, mother and Miss Browning went in search of the old gentleman at the different bookstalls he used to haunt, but in vain. The exact description of his face and dress were given to the police, in case he had met with an accident, or even worse, for as he was extremely absent-minded he might have been run over by a cart, cab or omnibus. The anxiety was extreme, especially when the dinner hour arrived and Mr Browning had not turned up. I recollect that my father was particularly uneasy, he had for hours been searching for the old man ; at last he tried Le Jardin des Plantes, and there he found Mr Browning seated on a wooden bench, absorbed, reading an old brown volume.

I remember my father telling me that the old gentleman was so interested in his book that when my father tapped him on the shoulder and shouted at him, Mr Browning did not for a few seconds recognise him. He was like a person in a trance. When he did wake up from his day-dreams, he exclaimed, in a tone of great elation, "I have found a real treasure," waving the brown calf volume ; "a real treasure!" in an excited voice. "I bought this *Junius* for twelve sous (sixpence) on an old second-hand bookstall close to this. I have been looking out for this, weeks and weeks, now it is mine," (clasping the volume to his heart).

My father tried to make him realise the agitation and anxiety his prolonged absence was causing not only to his daughter, but to all our household, and that the dinner hour was past, and we were all waiting for his arrival.

"So sorry," he exclaimed, rising, a triumphant smile flitting over his face, "but at last I have found this *Junius*—now it is mine" (again hugging the volume). "Splendid print, what a find!" (trembling from excitement).

The present no longer existed for old Mr Browning. He was unconscious of time, or of what Society or the world expected of him.

I remember another day when we had arranged to go with the Brownings to Bougival. We were waiting for the old gentleman at the station. Miss Browning was with us; she was much annoyed because her father had slipped away without telling her. We missed the train, and at last old Mr Browning appeared, holding a very soiled paper volume.

He cried excitedly, "Just bought this for five sous, *The Manning Murderers*, with a picture of the kitchen where the body was buried!"

Sarianna Browning was then a middle-aged woman. She had quick, sharp, intelligent eyes, like her illustrious poet brother's, and an abundance of blue-black hair. They were *habitués*, coming twice a week to dinner at our house, and joining us all in expeditions into the country. As a child I was very fond of the Brownings, and always walked with the old man, for he told me so many interesting stories. His pet name for me was "Pigtails." I wore my hair in two thick plaits hanging down my back, and Mr Browning liked tugging at them. He would relate with gusto wonderful, strange adventures, and was especially fond of tales about mysterious murders; indeed he had a detective's interest in crimes and criminals. I remember his excitement about the



Constance Kent case ; it was to him an endless source of speculation.

He always carried a sketch book and pencils, and when he saw anything that struck him in the street he would make rapid sketches ; often he would stop in front of *cabarets*, and draw groups of workmen drinking, smoking, gesticulating. He was an intense admirer of the Dutch school—Van Ostade and Teniers especially. His sketches were admirable, they were so full of life. When he returned home he would fill in the outlines with flat washes ; this part of the performance delighted me particularly as Mr Browning allowed me to mix the colours on his china palette. He was fond of drawing heads, which he did very rapidly in ink outlines, filled in with a little Indian red and yellow ochre ; he would scratch out the lights. Underneath each head (generally profiles) he wrote the words of conversation going on amongst all these ugly, queer people. The grotesque appealed strongly to Mr Browning ; he declared that he could not draw a pretty face.

He was a small, wiry man, over seventy, when we first knew him. He had a fine head with thick grey hair, kindly blue-grey eyes, and a biggish nose. He was extremely brisk in his movements even then, and he was a great walker.

He taught me to play draughts ; but nothing would induce me to learn chess, which was not, in my youthful estimation, a recreation.

The most characteristic and salient intellectual trait of old Mr Browning was his passion for reading ; he not only read, but he remembered. As his daughter often remarked, he read in season and out of season.

He told me that when a schoolboy he knew by heart the first book of the *Iliad*, and the Odes of Horace, and it is said that when the poet was an infant he would send him to sleep by humming odes of Anacreon. He also had a great power of versifying. It is recorded that he taught his little boy the words he wished him to remember by joining them to a grotesque rhyme. I recollect he tried to teach me a little elementary anatomy by means of comic illustrated rhymes.

Besides old books he was fond of prints. His enthusiasm for Hogarth was intense, and he had several engravings which he would show me when he considered that I had been a good little girl, and answered correctly questions he put to me out of ancient history or the Bible.

He was quite indifferent to creature comforts, and would have dressed most shabbily and have been extremely untidy if it had not been for the careful devotion of his daughter. I have often seen her brush his hair, and even wash his face !

He was a most interesting but shy old man, with great vivacity and freshness of mind, and he enjoyed grand health to the end.

I have never in the course of my life heard anyone relate an anecdote with so much point and *verve* as Miss Browning. When she began to talk it was no use trying to interrupt her flow of words. I recollect one afternoon she was describing a visit to a Paris dressmaker ; it was an inimitable scene. She repeated what the woman had said, and her own answers, described the dress materials, the cut, the beautiful cat which came in, and so on. Before she had finished

her dramatic account someone rushed in with the news of the sudden death of an acquaintance ; but Miss Browning took no heed, she just waited a second (though the person who died was well known to her), and then resumed the thread of her discourse. She generally stood up when she related anything, and as she was very short she would stand all the time on tiptoes. Though not handsome, she had an extremely pleasant, shrewd face, sparkling brown eyes, and a nice figure. I was devoted to Miss Browning, and never tired of her society.

Sarianna Browning, with her little innocent vanities, is a type that Jane Austen would have rendered immortal. One particular instance :—Her father had been a clerk in the Bank of England ; Miss Browning did not like this fact to be proclaimed *pro bono publico*. It used to amuse me when I was a child to watch the expression of annoyance on her face when he would remark, “When I was clerk in the Bank of England.” Miss Browning would try and catch his eye, nodding impatiently ; then the old man would probably recollect that she had told him not to dwell on that particular episode. He would get confused, and apologise. At other times, if she was sitting near her father and he began alluding to his past clerkship in the Bank, she would tread on his toes. Then he would exclaim, “Oh, I forgot,” making things far worse by his apology. She loved to talk about the grandees who visited her illustrious brother and sister-in-law ; but these were small defects, spots on the sun, for in her way she was a splendid character, a staunch friend, and

devoted to her family. Her wonderful affection and admiration for a Browning was touching, nothing that any one of them said or did could be wrong, it was all perfection.

She had been devotedly attached to her mother, and was fond of speaking about her. The poet's love of music must have been inherited from his mother, for she was an accomplished musician and played the piano charmingly. She was evidently gentle and good, and devoted to animals. I was also fond of them, and was never weary of questioning Miss Browning about their dumb pets.

Mr and Miss Browning then lived in a small apartment close to the "Invalides." They had an old servant-woman, Madame Louis, who cooked exquisitely; it was always a great treat for me to dine there and eat her delicious *œufs à la neige*, *croquettes de riz* and *omelettes soufflés*. In the afternoon Mr and Miss Browning would draw heads for me; he in ink with a wash of sepia, and she in pencil. Then she would tell me stories about animals.

Miss Browning was her brother's constant companion; they got on splendidly together; like the poet, she was a tremendous walker, an early riser, and enjoyed excellent health and spirits. She is now as devoted to her nephew "Pen" as she was to the other members of her family. The letters she still writes are delightful, and her handwriting, even at her advanced age (not far from ninety), is like copper-plate. She has improved in appearance as she has grown older, and is now a picturesque old lady. She dresses well and suitably in handsome dark silk; over

her snowy hair she wears a soft, white lace mantilla ; her manners are dignified ; her talk full of zest and point, for she expresses herself remarkably. There is something of the old Trojan about her, she never complains or gives in to ill-health, and is always ready to sacrifice herself for those she cares for.

A great friendship, lasting for nearly forty years, existed between my mother and Sarianna Browning ; during that long period they wrote constantly, and saw each other certainly twice a week. Stauchness and fidelity are her leading characteristics ; she is not expansive or demonstrative ; indeed, there may be a lack of *outward* sympathy ; she does not caress or purr, but one feels that she is thoroughly reliable. As a *raconteuse* she has no equal in my experience. Her way of relating an anecdote is unique. She has also that rare quality of sound common sense, flavoured now and then with flashes of inconsistency, which makes her a truly delightful companion.

## WILLIAM THACKERAY

My earliest recollection of a celebrity is William Thackeray. I was then about seven years of age, and we were living in Paris (my birthplace), as my father was the Paris correspondent of several leading English newspapers. My mother, who was a brilliant talker, and strikingly handsome, had weekly evening receptions, and her *salons* were the rendezvous of artistic and literary people, who met there to converse.

No one made such a vivid impression on my childish imagination as Mr Thackeray. He is the central figure which stands out in strong relief from the blurred surroundings. He had a formidable appearance, being over six feet, and broad in proportion. I distinctly recall the big head with the silvery hair, the rosy face, the spectacles, and the sunny, sweet smile which illumined his face and made it beautiful. I even admired the broken nose, and wondered how a boy could ever have been so wicked and audacious as to punch this great man's nose. I had heard of the famous *Vanity Fair*, and wondered why so celebrated a man should care to talk to us little children, and even play with us in such a simple, kindly way. He certainly was not too great or too tall to take an interest in our games. He would inquire after my dolls (I had six), remembering their names, and he even made a genealogical tree,



so that every *poupée* had a distinct history of her own. We five children clustered round his knees like Lilliputians round Brobdingnag. No wonder Mr Thackeray was our beloved giant.

One afternoon, as I was returning from the Tuileries with my father, we passed the famous English pastry-cook's shop, Colombain, in La Rue du Luxembourg. I gave a longing look at the cakes so temptingly displayed in the window.

Suddenly I heard a voice, which seemed something like an angel's from Heaven, saying,—

“Oh, give her a tart.”

My father, who was a great dreamer (he was then in Dreamland), shook himself like a big dog and exclaimed,—

“Hallo, Thackeray! Did not know you were in Paris.”

“Arrived last night,” was the answer; then, taking me by the hand,—

“Come with me, and choose what cakes you like best to eat. I see a grand display of open fruit tarts on that big table.”

Mr Thackeray conducted me solemnly to the spot.

“Now, eat as many as you can devour, while I have a talk with your father outside.”

I suppose I was a greedy little girl, for I remarked,—

“How nice to be always hungry, and always to have as many tarts as one can eat!”

Mr Thackeray's spectacles twinkled with fun.

He left me, and while I devoured the cakes I saw Mr Thackeray go towards a very poor, delicate woman, holding in her arms a wretched baby. She was leaning

for support against a tree, evidently in great destitution. He walked up to the woman, talked to her, and I saw him slip a five-franc in her hand.

He re-entered the shop with my father.

"Dear old plum-cakes!" exclaimed Mr Thackeray, "how they remind me of my schooldays." He took off his hat and bowed comically to them. When going out of the shop he presented me with a big one wrapped up in paper.

"What will Reine say?" remarked my father. "I had better buy a bottle of magnesia. That is her pet remedy for indigestion."

Reine was our French *bonne d'enfants*. She had been in our household ever since my babyhood; a despotic being who ruled us with a rod of iron; though I was fond of her, she frightened me. Her face reminded me of a vulture I had seen in Le Jardin des Plantes. She had small grey eyes—eyes that seemed to pierce one through like a gimlet, a hooked nose with dilated nostrils, and thin lips. She always wore a black cap and black dress; this added to the severity of her appearance. As my mother was delicate and often confined to her room, Reine, who loved power, little by little grew more and more tyrannical. She had many hobbies on the proper rearing of children; one was that of nourishing us with a soup consisting of flabby pieces of bread and carrots, swimming in *bouillon*. Reine used to declare that, if the stomach could speak, it would ask for carrots!

We disliked this *potage*, so Reine insisted upon feeding us herself. We five children had to stand



round her, while she, holding the tureen in one hand and a spoon in the other, thrust the soup into our open mouths as if we were birds in a nest. Reine had such a strong will that to rebel seemed useless. I was certainly the most troublesome, and often kept my mouth closed when the horrible spoonful approached me; but I was resolved to put an end to being thus fed, and my ally in this civil, or rather uncivil, war was Mr Thackeray.

One very warm afternoon in July—we were then spending the summer in a nice villa near Bois de Boulogne—my mother and father had gone to Paris for the day, and the cook had a holiday. Reine had arranged to feed us in the garden in front of the house, which looked out on the highroad. She hugged the tureen with its greasy contents in her left arm, in the right she held, like a sceptre, the spoon.

“Allons, petits oiseaux, ouvrez vos becques” (“Little birds, open your beaks”), she called out to us in a voice like herself, concentrated and despotic.

We gathered round her. To be still fed like a baby when I was nearly eight years of age was profoundly humiliating. I determined not to bear it any longer, and this very day I was in a particularly rebellious frame of mind.

I had seen on the road the tall figure of my dear giant, Mr Thackeray. I knew that he was coming to pay us a visit. There was a ring at the door just as Reine was digging the spoon in the soup. My moment had come!

“I hate that nasty stuff,” I called out, as Reine left

us in order to answer the front door. She had deposited the tureen on the grass plot.

"Horrible, disgusting soup!" I cried out, making faces at the tureen and pouring out the contents on the grass.

My brothers and sisters howled with dismay, crying out,—

"Oh, Reine will punish us all, and put us in *le cabinet noir*!" This was a dark closet, a kind of lumber-room, where the naughty one of the family was locked in for a couple of hours.

"I would much rather be punished than eat this nasty soup. I hate being fed, like an infant, with a spoon!"

As I uttered these words I looked up, and there, standing on the door steps, was Mr Thackeray!

He had taken off his hat; his face was rosy, his white hair shone like silver in the sunlight.

My little brothers and sisters marched up to him, crying, "Oh, we are going to be punished," pointing to me, who was then standing by the side of the fallen tureen and mess of boiled bread and carrots on the grass; "she has thrown away the *potage*."

A puzzled but amused expression flitted over the great man's face.

As for Reine, I can never forget her furious appearance. Her little eyes blazed with anger, her hooked nose visibly swelled—she was the image of an angry vulture. This open rebellion infuriated her. She shook her fist at me, but I was not afraid; Mr Thackeray was near me, he would fight my battle. With such a champion I defied Reine.

"You shall go to bed early, and have a piece of dry bread for dinner," said Reine, her voice trembling with rage.

"Don't let her punish me," I whispered to Mr Thackeray (in English), "she is so furious." I clutched hold of his coat.

Mr Thackeray walked solemnly towards the tureen, which he picked up and asked for the spoon, which I found lying in the hedge.

"It is disgusting stuff—just taste it, Mr Thackeray," showing him the tureen, in which remained a wee drop of soup.

His gold-rimmed spectacles beamed with suppressed fun. He took the spoon and, perceiving a camp-stool, sat down, when lo! he tumbled sprawling on the grass, close to the flabby bread and carrots. He laughed, and we children joined in, with the exception of Reine, who looked at the scene scornfully. Mr Thackeray did not rise. He tasted the soup. I shall never forget the funny grimace he made.

He got up, smiled at us little ones (how delightful his smile was!), beckoned to Reine, whispered something into her ear, then they both went into the house. After a few minutes Mr Thackeray returned.

"It is all right now," said our dear giant, "I have pacified Reine, and you," putting his hand on my shoulder, "will no longer be fed like a baby."

And to be sure, when Reine reappeared she looked crestfallen and almost meek.

"Put on your hats and *pelisses*, children, and I will take you out in a *voiture* and give you a treat."

Oh, how happy he made us that day! He told us

a story of a giant who had a bed made of chocolate, which he licked continually ; pillows of sponge-cakes ; blankets made of jellies ; chairs made of delicious *bonbons*—how we envied this personage. The *facre* stopped in front of a *patisserie*, and we all had cakes and *bonbons*. I remember Mr Thackeray pulled a large red silk pocket-handkerchief out of one of his pockets and wiped our faces. Small wonder that he was our king of men.

Most of my Thackeray incidents seem more or less to relate to food.

One afternoon I went with my mother to pay a visit to Mrs Carmichael Smythe, Mr Thackeray's aged mother. I had a great dread of her. She struck me as being severe and preachy. At first I listened to the conversation which took place in the drawing-room, but getting very bored I made my way to *la salle à manger*. The cloth was laid, and in a corner of the table was a little dish, filled with long vermilion pods. I had never seen them before ; they fascinated and puzzled me. Were they good to eat, I wondered ? A *diabolina* of mischief seized me—I would taste one, and see what it was like. I picked one, and put it into my mouth. Oh, how it burned ! I was going to spit it out, when to my dismay I saw Mr Thackeray looking at me with a broad smile on his kindly face. I must have looked the picture of misery.

“A chili in her poor little mouth !” he exclaimed. “How it must burn ; very droll,” he kept on muttering.

It was a terrible, a cruel moment for me when I stood before him, my eyes full of tears, my fat cheeks bulging out. It was getting unbearable.

Mr Thackeray felt sorry for me. He left the room. I then coughed up, and got rid of the fearful pickle. Never again would I taste of the forbidden fruit.

Mr Thackeray took out a pocket-book and sketched me with the chili in my mouth. The grimace, the bulging-out cheeks were admirably rendered. I laughed heartily.

One late afternoon, after having told us many thrilling stories, Mr Thackeray looked at his watch, exclaiming, "It is time for me to go and get some dinner. I am so hungry."

We coaxed him to remain, and asked him what he would like to eat.

"There is nothing, my little dear, you can give me," he answered with a funny little sigh. "I have queer tastes, and could only eat the chop of a rhinoceros or a slice from an elephant."

"I can give it you," exclaimed my youngest sister, disappearing into a cupboard. She emerged with a look of triumph on her face, holding in her hand a wooden rhinoceros, and an elephant from her Noah's ark, and, putting the two animals on a plate, she handed them with great gravity to Mr Thackeray.

Oh, what a look of delight on the great man's face! How he chuckled and rubbed his hands! Then, taking my sister up in his arms, he kissed her, remarking, "Ah, little rogue, you already know the value of a kiss."

Then he asked for a knife and fork, smacked his lips, and pretended to devour the elephant and rhinoceros.

One evening I had gone to bed, Mr Thackeray, peeping into the room, spied my crinoline, which was on a chair. He examined it, and to my horror put his



big head through the aperture, and walked into the drawing-room with it round his neck, looking like Michael Angelo's statue of Moses.

A few months later Mr Thackeray and I had a quarrel. I was an impulsive child, unlike my sister Alice, who always had a loving manner and charming ways with almost everyone she knew. I used to envy her caressing, flattering manners, which seemed to express more than she could possibly feel for so many. I was brusque, and even to those I cared for most deeply, my manner was reserved and cold, almost rude.

One afternoon, about a year after the soup episode, as I was taking my usual promenade with my father, we met a friend, who casually remarked that Mr Thackeray would be in Paris on the following day.

"I am so glad, for I love Mr Thackeray, he is so kind ; he always gives us each a new five-franc piece," I blurted out.

The moment I heard my voice muttering this I could have torn my tongue out of my mouth. It would probably be repeated to Mr Thackeray, and he would think I cared for him because he gave me a five-franc piece every time he came to see us.

Nobody can know what I suffered. My affection for Mr Thackeray was entirely disinterested. He was my hero, who took such a tender interest in our little lives, and he would now imagine that I only cared for what he gave me.

I was miserable. What could I say or do to obliterate this most unfortunate remark about his giving me a five-franc piece? How could I show him that I cared for him and not for any little present

he made me? How could I prove that it was his sweet, kindly, delightful self alone that I loved?

The next night, when I and my two sisters were in our three respective beds, they soon fell fast asleep, but I could not close my eyes; I was too tormented. My unfortunate speech, "He always gives us a new five-franc piece," resounded in my ears, making me feel miserable. I now heard his pleasant voice talking to my father and mother in the adjoining *salon*. Our bedroom door was cautiously opened, and in marched Mr Thackeray, my mother preceding him, holding a lighted candle.

Our three little iron beds were in a row; I closed my eyes, pretending to be asleep, but I could just see that he was smiling at us. Then, putting his hand in his pocket, he murmured, "Now for the distribution of medals," and chuckling, he deposited on each of our pillows a five-franc piece, remarking, "They will think the fairies have been here." But the moment the coin was on my pillow I opened my eyes and hissed out impetuously, "I won't have any money; no more five-franc pieces for me. I like you for *yourself*, not for what you give me." Sitting up in bed I hurled the silver piece, and heard it rolling down the parquet floor.

"Oh, what can this burst of passion mean?" I heard my mother exclaim; "oh, you naughty girl!"

"I suppose she thinks she is getting too big to have money given to her," remarked Mr Thackeray, with a shade of disappointment in his voice.

When they left the room I burst into an agony of tears, and sobbed and sobbed till I thought my heart would break.

## MRS CARMICHAEL SMYTHE

THOUGH I was fond of Mr Thackeray, his old mother, Mrs Carmichael Smythe, terrified me. I can just recollect a very tall, handsome, stately, stern woman, arrayed in black velvet. She was considered very religious and good, but I had a shrinking then from the so-called religious people, for those I had met were so dull that they bored me terribly, especially when they talked of God and Jesus Christ. I had, as a child, my own imaginings about the Almighty and His only Son, and I clung to these ideals, for they were far more poetical and attractive than what Low Church folk represented them to be.

When Mrs Carmichael talked about God to me she always made me think that He was an angry, harsh, old gentleman, who saw every little act of mine, and would eventually punish me. Her description of hell was terrible.

One particular afternoon my father, who had taken me out for a walk in the Champs Elysées, suddenly remembered an appointment, and, to my disgust, called upon Mrs Carmichael Smythe, who then resided with her aged husband in an apartment of a house situated close to the Champs Elysées. He asked if he might leave me with her for a couple of hours, when he would call or send for me.



Mrs Carmichael Smythe was sitting in an armchair by a table on which reposed a big brown Bible. She granted my father's request and I was left with this stern old lady. I sat on a stool feeling very cross, while she put her long lean hand on the old Bible and asked me questions about what I had been doing, what lessons I had been learning. Had I been a good child? I recollect that I answered "No." She seemed rather shocked, and read me a chapter of the Bible. I yawned. She said it was disrespectful to yawn when listening to the Bible. Then she inquired what were the chapters I liked best—the characters I admired? I promptly answered, "Nebuchadnezzar, and the funny little man Zaccheus, who climbed up a tree to see and hear Jesus." I also said I thought Noah's Ark amusing, and that I should like to have seen the serpent talking to Eve.

She was evidently shocked, and began to lecture me, but I burst into tears, declaring that I hated religious people, they were so severe and dull. At this juncture her old husband walked in. He was called "G. P." by Mr Thackeray's two daughters. He was a nice, but ugly, old man. He had that day a large red handkerchief tied round his hat for warmth's sake, and he had not put his arms through his coat sleeves, so they dangled about; his boots were turned up at the toes and were very shabby. He laughed when he heard my rebellious speech, took me by the hand, led me into the dining-room, gave me a slice of plumcake, chuckling all the while, and then left me—evidently to have a talk with Mrs Carmichael Smythe.

While left alone, a *diabolina* within me urged me to

run away. I managed to open the door, flew down the stairs, and was out in the streets in less than a minute. Fortunately I met a friend of my mother's, a kind, gentle, sensible being, one of the few who understood the child-nature. She did not reprove me, but left word with the *concierge* to tell my father when he called or sent for me that she was taking me back to my mother's home.

I never would go again to see Mrs Carmichael Smythe—wild horses could not have driven me there—the atmosphere stifled me. She sent me a message that she earnestly prayed God to make me a good, obedient child. I often wondered how the charming, humorous, kindly William Thackeray could be the son of such an austere old lady. I never solved that riddle.

## FIRST MEETING WITH ELIZABETH BARRETT AND ROBERT BROWNING

It was in La Rue Basse des Ramparts, Boulevard des Italiens (the apartment with my dear balcony), that I first saw the two great poets and their son Penini. I think what has impressed this particular visit on my mind is the fact that my mother had told me that two poets were coming to see her that afternoon.

I had seen pictures of Dante and Tasso, and imagined that the Brownings would wear wreaths of laurel round their heads and be draped in togas, so my disappointment was great when our French servant opened the door and announced "Monsieur et Madame Brunig."

Could that frail little lady, attired in a simple grey dress and straw bonnet, and the cheerful gentleman in a brown overcoat, be great poets!

As we lived *au cinquieme*, Elizabeth Barrett Browning was quite exhausted after climbing so many stairs. She panted a great deal and was very pale. My mother pushed her gently into a large, low armchair. How thin and small she looked lying back! I stared at her, overpowered by a kind of awe, wondering where the poetry was; and then I felt sure it was in her large dark eyes, like seas of light, and full of soul. She

wore her thick brown hair in long curls, and, from illness, I suppose, held her head on one side. She struck me then as being all eyes and hair, not unlike a spaniel.

Penini, I remember, had long golden ringlets; he wore white drawers edged with embroidery; these peculiarities impressed me, for I thought he looked like a girl. They brought with them a beautiful brown dog, with golden eyes. After a few minutes of general conversation, which I thought extremely dull and commonplace for such great poets, Mrs Barrett Browning beckoned to me. I approached her, feeling shy. What was that little, but *great*, woman going to speak about to a small child like me? I was soon put at my ease. In a feeble voice she said, "You and Penini must be friends, dear. He is my Florentine boy," stroking his head lovingly. "Has he not got beautiful hair? so golden—that is because he was born in Italy, where the sun is always golden." Then she kissed me and placed my hand in Pen's.

The tea-things were now brought in; on the tray was a big plum-cake. The dog wagged his tail, and then Mrs Browning said to me, "Flush is a dear, devoted old dog. When I was very ill Flush never left my side day and night. Every time I put my hand out of the bed I could always feel his curly head and cold nose."

Flush, on hearing his mistress mention his name, looked up in her face with intense love in his beautiful, wistful eyes.

We gave Flush some slices of bread and butter, which he accepted, but instead of eating them he dis-

appeared underneath a big satin sofa ; but when I presented him with a piece of plum-cake he swallowed it there and then with gusto.

I recollect that Mrs Barrett Browning whispered to me that if I looked under the divan I would find the bread and butter hidden there. She explained that Flush was far too polite a dog to refuse anything offered to him ; but from personal observation she knew that he would not eat bread and butter when he saw any chance of getting plum-cake.

Pen and I crept on all fours and looked under the divan ; yes, there were all the slices of thin bread and butter in a row, and untouched.

During most of her visit Mrs Barrett Browning kept her right arm round her little son's neck, running her long, thin fingers through his golden curls. She struck me as being very loving.

I recollect that my mother mentioned the subject of spiritualism and the name of some medium.

Mr Browning, whose loud tone of voice was a contrast to his wife's, exclaimed, "What ! a clever woman like you to be taken in by such humbugs and charlatans !" Then Mrs Browning, in her thin, little voice, said something about her interest in the subject, and then everybody spoke at once. Flush barked and Pen yawned ; and then they said good-bye, and left. I heard a few days after that the Brownings had gone to Florence. My mother, now and then, received letters from "Casa Guidi."

I was glad to hear Mr Robert Browning denounce spiritualism and mediums, etc. : it had a good effect on me, for I was then prone to believe in ghosts, and

had a terror of being left in the dark alone. But after his visit, I used to mutter to myself, "Mr Browning, who is a great man, and a poet, declares that it is nonsense—that there are no spirits, and mamma is taken in." It troubled me, for I knew that my mother was considered very clever, and that was the reason so many gifted people came to see her. No doubt Mrs Browning believed, like my mother, in spiritualism, so I was often puzzled. Mr Browning seemed, however, the incarnation of good health and of common sense. In his presence a ghost might not care to appear. He was just the sort of man to throw a slipper, a book, or an ink-bottle at anything which annoyed him. Perhaps spirits knew this and took care not to be seen by him!

After this visit of the Brownings I felt strangely disillusioned. I was an imaginative child, and having learnt a great deal of poetry by heart, I had pictured to myself poets as ethereal beings. It gave me a shock to see Mr Browning eat with avidity so much bread and butter and big slices of plum-cake. He never uttered a word that in any way suggested a poetical thought. His coat, trousers and gloves were according to the fashion of the time; his voice loud and cheerful; his thick hair well brushed. Altogether, in my opinion, he looked a prosperous man of business.

Now his retiring, shy, old father, with his quaint ways, simplicity and unworldliness, was, in my estimation, much more like a man of genius than his celebrated son, Robert Browning.



## EMPEROR LOUIS NAPOLEON AND THE EMPRESS EUGENIE

To be noticed by an Emperor, though ever so slightly, cannot but make an impression on a child's mind. And though it is so long ago, the incident stands out from the blurred past with photographic clearness.

It was on a lovely morning. I remember how exquisitely green and fresh the trees and the grass looked, lit up by the delicious Paris sunshine. We five children were walking in Le Bois de Boulogne, escorted by our French *bonne*. I was bounding along, looking out for wild flowers. I had discovered, to my joy, a bush of white hawthorn, and was in the act of tugging unsuccessfully at a branch, when a small gentleman with piercing, small, grey eyes, and a moustache waxed at the corners, stood in front of me, broke off a large spray and handed it to me with a bright, kindly smile and courteous manner that impressed me. Then gazing at me, he exclaimed in French, to two other gentlemen who were standing behind him, "Ah, quelle figure de prospérité !" Then he patted my fat, rosy cheeks, saying, "Quelle bonne santé !"

Perceiving my little brothers and sisters approaching, he remarked, "Quel troupeau de beaux enfants. Anglais évidemment" ("What a flock of fine children. English evidently").



When the three gentlemen had passed on, our *bonne* exclaimed excitedly, “Mon Dieu, c’est l’Empereur avec ses aides-de-camps.”

As she uttered this we saw a handsome carriage and pair, with servants decked out in the Imperial livery, drive up and stop at a quiet corner, and the Emperor and his suite get inside.

That winter my parents gave me a great treat—they took me to the Opera des Italiens. It was the first time I had ever been inside a theatre, and never can I forget the vivid impressions of wonder and delight.

Driving to the opera I felt as excited as Cinderella probably felt when she approached the prince’s palace on the night of the eventful glass-slipper ball.

Going up the grand staircase I took a peep at myself in one of the tall mirrors—alas! I was not like Cinderella; only a very plump little girl, with cheeks the colour of red apples. My thick, dark hair was plaited as usual in two big pig-tails, which hung down to my (policeman’s) waist. I wore a pink dress, and was conscious that I was not in keeping with my gorgeous surroundings.

As we entered, the Emperor Louis Napoleon and the Empress Eugenie were taking their seats in a box opposite ours.

The music, the lights, the jewels, the shimmering draperies of the ladies, the perfume of the bouquets, transported me with delight. I stood up between my father and mother in a state of great excitement, the upper half of my body hanging out of the box. I was in another world. A tap on my shoulder aroused me from my dreamland.

"The Emperor and Empress are looking at you," whispered my father. Then my mother tugged at my dress and made me sit down; interchange of nods had been noticed by the majority of the audience: an army of opera-glasses were levelled at our box.

The Empress Eugenie was a vision of beauty. I had never beheld such a being. She wore white, sparkling with diamonds and pearls. Such a neck and shoulders! Her golden hair was worn turned back *à l'Eugenie*. Her eyes were the colour of turquoises.

The opera was tragic, there was a great deal of crying and blowing of noses.

"What a concert of pocket-handkerchiefs," I remarked to my mother, who was also weeping.

When the curtain dropped there was an outburst of applause and cries of "Vive l'Empereur, Vive l'Imperatrice." I rushed out of the box and ran down the corridor, for I wanted to have another peep at my friend, the Emperor.

I was just in time to hear His Majesty exclaim, while looking at me, with a smile, "This little English girl, with her rosy cheeks, does rejoice me." The Empress smiled kindly at me.

When she moved her walk was undulating, and so graceful, reminding one of a white swan. I heard my father say, while watching the Empress, "The poetry of motion!"

I ran down the stairs. There was a dense crowd and more cries of "Vive l'Empereur! Vive l'Imperatrice." They entered the carriage, which had an escort of soldiers on horseback. More shouts of "Vive l'Empereur"—in which I joined lustily.

As I was standing on the opera steps, waiting for my parents, Le Comte Alfred de Vigny exclaimed,—

“Ah ! petite Henriette d’Angleterre” (he always called me this), “so this is your first night at the opera. Now, little girl, you have had a great treat which you will never forget.”

He was right, it was my first peep into Fairy-land.

After that night I went several times to the opera, for my father often got a box, and he could not resist my entreaties. Cruvelli was the *prima donna*, and she was to me a kind of goddess.

One day, as I was playing with my hoop in the Tuileries, it rolled and fell at a lady’s feet. What was my delight and surprise to have it handed back to me by the famous *prima donna*.

I was so tongue-tied by overwhelming delight that I took it from her without even thanking her ; but she smiled so sweetly that I am sure she understood my feelings.

## OURSELVES

CERTAIN picture impressions remain vividly on my mind, standing out with astonishing clearness from obscure surroundings. I recollect one summer afternoon playing with my little sister in Le Bois de Boulogne, and suddenly looking towards the villa, where we were then residing for the summer, seeing my mother gazing at us from an open window. It struck me then forcibly that she ought to have been a princess, or a duchess, she was so distinguished and beautiful—so unlike any one I had ever seen. She was dressed in a style she had adopted, and which she kept to, whatever the fashions happened to be. She wore a kind of loose garment, something like a tea-gown; the colour of it that day was silvery grey trimmed and lined with pale pink silk, and she had a thick gold chain twisted round her throat. The garment was fastened by a cameo brooch. On her delicate wrists were massive gold bracelets. Over her soft brown hair she wore a small black lace mantilla. Her features were delicately chiselled, and of classic shape, except the forehead, which was high and intellectual. I have often heard her called by her friends a Sybil, a Valeda, a Sphinx. Her general appearance was unique and striking. There was something dramatic in her gestures: when she talked, she

gesticulated, and moved her hands about a great deal ; they were lovely, white, satin-skinned hands, with blue veins, tapered fingers, and almond-shaped nails. She was very nervous and excitable, had decidedly the gift of eloquence, but lacked humour : she was inclined to be too much in earnest. She was a perfect hostess, and though a brilliant talker was especially a sympathetic listener. Once a week, I think it was on a Saturday evening, she received her friends, and had quite a court of admirers. As I was a child at that time it was only in later years that I knew who constituted the distinguished gathering :—Thackeray, Alfred de Vigny, Leon de Wailly, Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Joseph Milsand, William Darley, Richard Cobden, De Pressensé, etc., etc.

Everybody looked commonplace when my mother was present. She seemed to have stepped out of a picture by an old master—a Leonardo da Vinci, or a Francia. Though I thoroughly admired her, I was ill at ease in her presence. She did not understand the child-nature ; she lived too much on the intellectual heights, was too lofty in her views to sympathise with the little erring ones. When she was angry she poured forth a volume of eloquence, and I used to think it a pity to waste such fine language on a mere child. I remember once exclaiming, “Oh, mamma, can I call in someone to hear you speak ?” She had very strict notions and views about life and religion, and my faults of disobedience, greediness, telling of fibs filled her with an undue sense of horror. Her stirring, eloquent vehemence against my sinning nature was out of proportion to my faults. She was

like Jeremiah. Her face had at times a stern sadness, which I have never seen equalled; Michael Angelo would have been delighted to have had my mother as a model for some of his greatest conceptions. There was a want of elasticity in her nature; severity seemed to me her dominant note; but at times she could be sweet and sympathetic, and then her brilliant smile chased away all trace of sternness. She was a great reader, and would remain locked up in her bedroom till the afternoon, devouring her favourite authors, generally mystics, such as Swedenborg, Marcus Aurelius, Madame Guyon, Jacob Boehm, and last, but not least, the Bible. She insisted, when I was a mere mite, that I was to learn by heart passages of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, *L'Allegro*, *Il Penseroso*, *Comus*, the *Iliad* (Pope's translation). I especially loved Achilles, Ulysses, Hector, etc.; they were like friends, all living and human, but my favourite book was the *Arabian Nights*. As a child I dreaded Sundays, for my mother read to us little ones sermons such as "Law's Serious Call," and works of that stamp. I was not allowed to read what I liked, so I would sit on the balcony and wonder if God really wished children to be bored on Sunday by having to listen to sermons they couldn't understand, and which made them feel more wicked. Certainly the happiest hours of my childhood have been spent on that dear old balcony overlooking the Boulevard des Italiens. We lived on the fifth floor in a large house; the first floor was inhabited by a Marquis and a Marquise; on the second *étage* was a celebrated doctor. But I did not envy the people below us, for the view from our balcony was delightful;



we were perched so high that we could see the church of La Madeleine, the Marché aux Fleurs, and the Boulevards, which were always crowded and so gay. The shops struck me as wonderful ; and there were the people sitting in the bright *cafés* and restaurants, the carriages rolling past, the smartly-dressed women, the funny French soldiers. I could see everything from this balcony. I looked down into an ever-varying kaleidoscope which fascinated me. In the summer I sat there amongst the flower-pots, under a pink and white awning, nursing my dolls ; one of them had been sent to me, I believed by God. I had seen this wonderful *bébé* in a shop. She was dressed in blue silk, and had golden curly hair, and eyes that opened and shut. I had written in pencil a letter in French addressed to "Le Bon Dieu, Au Ciel," begging Him to send me that particular doll ; and if I got it I should then believe that He had taken notice of me. I had inquired the price of the doll, it was twenty-five francs. That seemed a big sum, but I did not despair of getting it ; so every night I prayed aloud and asked God to read my pencil letter—which was illegible.

One night (it was my birthday) I fancied I heard a rustling noise. Perhaps it is an angel, I thought. Next morning, the long-wished-for doll in the blue dress was reposing at the foot of my bed. I took her up with a feeling of awe ; I believed that she had been really sent to me by God. I put her carefully in my cupboard, and baptised her Theodora—a gift from God. I never allowed anyone to touch her, she was a sacred fetish.

The constant funerals that passed our house, on

their way to the Church of La Madeleine, made me think much about death. The French people pay great outward respect to the dead ; every man takes off his hat in Paris when a funeral passes, and the women make the sign of the Cross. I was one day deeply impressed by seeing the French Emperor, Louis Napoleon, touch his hat as the small white coffin of a child passed close to his carriage. I often pondered over that great mystery, death, till my head sometimes ached.

My father, who was a literary man, was much of a dreamer. People used to think he was very deaf, and would shout at him in order to make him hear ; but he was not deaf, only it was that he seldom listened, being in Dreamland. He had the jolliest laugh I have ever heard ; quite Homeric ! His Ha-ha-ha was so infectious that even without knowing the cause of his merriment everybody joined in the laughing chorus.

He was a great contrast to my mother, who had little sense of fun, did not as a rule enjoy jokes, and had a horror of puns. He was the soul of geniality, hospitality and kindness. He was pleasant-looking, with mild blue eyes and auburn hair. As he was bald he wore a kind of wig, or rather a *toupet*, to conceal the nakedness of the top of his head. This *toupet* was generally on one side ; my father, being extremely absent-minded, would push it, and push it, so that it often hung at the back of his neck in a disconsolate condition, and I would be thrown into a state of positive agony for fear it might fall to the ground when a friend or acquaintance was present : it would have been so painful to see anyone laughing at my father. My

sister, a year younger than myself, was very fair and pretty, she had lovely, dreamy, blue eyes, a rosebud of a mouth, and an abundance of light curly hair. She had the most sweet and caressing manners.

It used to puzzle me to see her so affectionate to everybody. Though we were sisters, with only a year's difference between us, and had the same teaching, and came under the same influences, there could not possibly have been two greater contrasts, mentally, morally and physically. My sister craved for affection from everyone and got it. I was at that time the incarnation of good health and high spirits: frank, with generous impulses, imaginative, undisciplined, brusque, mischievous, and I could tell a fib if I found it in any way useful.

I had fat rosy cheeks, like apples, small but bright grey eyes, and an abundance of blue-black hair.

People called me *Hebé*, or "*Sans Souci*," for I certainly was indifferent and cared little for anybody or anything then. I was a great walker and loved my hoop and skipping-rope. I lived in a world of my own; my sole confidante was the imaginary being *Mélanie*, who lived in the wall. My other sister was the most like our mother in face; but she was a shy, nervous little girl, who ran away from strangers and was devoted to the few she cared for. I remember one summer night finding her on her knees on the balcony. There was a big moon, and I heard her say, "Oh, Moon, do listen to me, and please tell an angel, who will tell it to God, to make the devil good. Poor old devil, perhaps he wants to be good, but he can't."

My brothers made no impression on my life. The

elder one was witty and amusing, but he had a queer temper ; the other one was handsome and *peculiar* ! and left home early for America. Our servant Reine, whom I have already mentioned, was at that period the tyrant of our household, as my mother was delicate, and generally shut up in her bedroom with her favourite authors. Reine gradually became the major-domo, and with the exception of my small self everyone was afraid of her.

She was a widow and had an only child, a hunch-backed girl, to whom she was devoted. Though Reine was a bully and often ill-tempered I was attached to her—indeed, she was the only one in the household who appreciated and at all understood me. When I was afraid of being alone in the dark, or fancied I might see a ghost, she never laughed at me, but humoured me.

We had about that time a queer old music-mistress, Madame Germain, whom I disliked, and would not obey. She used to declare that in her youth she had been a beauty, and could have married a royal prince, but being born a *coquette* had thrown away all her splendid *partis*, and had ended by marrying Monsieur Alphonse Germain, a professor of mathematics. When she came to our house she was quite elderly, wore a brown curly wig, rouged her sunken cheeks, painted her eyebrows, and wore short skirts and dancing shoes to display her feet and ankles, which were, she said, beautiful, the high-arched insteps denoting her noble birth. She invariably carried a velvet bag, in which were several letters from old admirers. When I played my scale properly she would read aloud these effusions to us little girls as a kind of treat. She had

a tortoise-shell box in which were slices of barley sugar ; when we were extra good she gave us a small bit as a token of satisfaction. As a rule I was disobedient, and she used to call me *diable*, but my sister, who was docile and kissed her, was an *angel*.

One morning I had amused myself by drawing a caricature (I had a special gift in that line) of Madame Germain. It was really so funny that Reine laughed, but advised me either to hide or destroy it, for if Madame Germain discovered it she would certainly punish me, as she was so vain. My drawing made her look quite hideous, but I wished the old lady to see herself as I saw her, so I left the caricature on a table in the room where we had our piano lessons. When I came in I saw by the expression of her wizened face that she had seen the sketch, and guessed who had drawn it. I played my scale better than usual—but she remarked that I pounded the piano like a hippopotamus, that I would never play well, for I had too much the nature of the demon.

“I like demons better than angels,” I exclaimed. “Angels are too much like milk puddings, they have no flavour, I like something with pepper.”

“How can you be so profane !” shrieked Madame Germain. “You require to be tamed, you are like a wild animal, but I know what will do you good.”

She left the room. I went to the table ; the caricature had disappeared. Madame Germain returned, holding in her hand a large holland bag, which I recognised as the dirty linen household bag. She glared at me, and taking me by the shoulders managed to push me inside the bag. At first I



thought it funny, so I did not resist. She then fastened the strings round my neck, so that I was unable to stir.

"Now," exclaimed Madame Germain, "this ought to humiliate you."

I was facing a long cheval glass. I was boiling with rage, but pretended not to care that I looked ridiculous.

"I am like a mummy," I remarked, laughing.

Madame Germain again left the room, and returned a few minutes after holding a handful of ashes, which she promptly threw over my head.

"Sackcloth and ashes," she exclaimed triumphantly. "You must remain here till I give a lesson to your angel sister."

When I was left alone dreadful thoughts of revenge flitted through my brain, such as pulling off her wig and throwing it in the fire, or placing a string or wire across her path in order to make her fall. My sister was playing a tune in the next room, Madame Germain loudly squeaking out, "*Très bien, mon ange.*"

I was getting tired of standing in the bag, when, peeping out of the window, I saw a gentleman who was a friend of my father's and mother's approaching our house. He was an author of distinction, named Monsieur de Wailly. I thumped at the window with my poor head, it was all I could do, for my arms were useless and confined to my sides in the horrid bag.

He looked up, and an expression of great surprise flitted over his handsome face. He nodded to me, and in less than five minutes entered the room.



"That horrid music-mistress forced me into this sack," I cried out, "because she was so angry with me for making a drawing of her ; and she put ashes on my head to humiliate me—but I don't care."

Monsieur de Wailly, though he could not help smiling at the ridiculous image I presented, exclaimed, "Too bad ! I shall be your deliverer. Poor little Andromeda, I am your Perseus !"

He cut the strings with a penknife and helped me out, showing me infinite courtesy.

"Poor little girl," he muttered, "it is a most wicked thing to have done," wiping off the ashes with his delicately-scented pocket-handkerchief, which he held in a lilac-gloved hand. (He was considered one of the best-dressed men in Paris society.)

I felt inclined to weep, but controlled myself.

"Where are your father and mother ?" he asked.

"They are both out. Madame Germain would not have dared to do this if they had been at home."

"This tyranny must be put a stop to. I shall speak to your father and mother ; Madame Germain is going too far in her methods of punishment."

Monsieur de Wailly did speak most effectively ; the result was that Madame Germain had to leave. I never saw her again.

I drew another caricature of her for Monsieur de Wailly ; he was delighted with it, and in return presented me with a box of *bonbons* from that king of *bonbons*, Boissier. We swore eternal friendship from that day.

The gentlest, shyest of beings, Monsieur Maillard, taught us arithmetic and history. He had a rather

hard time with me, for I hated arithmetic. Poor Monsieur Maillard! His attitude in life was one of constant apology. He was gentle and timid, and could neither scold nor lose his temper. His manners were dignified and courteous. He always reverently kissed my mother's hand when he met her. He took snuff copiously, generally leaving stains on our books and papers. I have often hidden his *tabatière*, but when he looked at me sadly in his mild, deprecating manner, I would replace it on the table.

His figure was lean and long; his hair snowy white; his feet were flat and big. He always wore the same brown coat, buff waistcoat, blue trousers, rather short and baggy at the knees, and a grey felt hat; a red handkerchief invariably peeped out of one of his side pockets.

Poor old man, he caught a *fluxion de poitrine*, and died after a week's illness.

I was deeply grieved, and insisted upon going to his funeral with Reine. He was buried at Mount Parnasse Cemetery; there were not a handful of mourners. When the coffin was lowered I wept, and begged sincerely his forgiveness for having so often teased him. I fervently hoped that in the next world he would have plenty of good snuff and no naughty children to teach. I laid flowers on his humble grave; indeed, I often went there with Reine, and laid there bunches of violets, his favourite flowers.

## ABOUT MY FATHER MEETING BALZAC

My father told me that he had had the great privilege of seeing Balzac at the chief editor's of *La Patrie*, a leading evening paper. My father happened to be in the *sanctum sanctorum*, into which dropped all sorts of public characters to listen and talk over the news of the day. On one occasion there entered a stout, vigorous man, who from his costume might have been taken for a monk were it not that a quantity of rich curly brown hair fell over the black *paletot* buttoned to the chin. This individual had splendidly luminous eyes ; altogether he looked a man of abounding life and power. All the people in the office rose at once with marked respect, but he, in the most free-and-easy way, wheeled round a chair, on which he mounted horseback fashion, resting his arms on the part turned to him. This man was the greatest writer of French fiction—the immortal Balzac. Before dropping down in this unceremonious fashion Balzac thrust his hands down deep into the pockets of his *paletot*, as if searching for loose change, exclaiming at the same time : “ J’ai besoin d’argent, de beaucoup d’argent ! ” ( I want money, a great deal of money ).

Having evidently relieved his mind by this explosion, he struck off into a magnificent flow of speech, chiefly about Art, speaking of Raphael with enthusiasm,

as if paintings of the highest order were the pleasure and business of his life. He remarked that he could hardly trust himself in a *bric-à-brac* shop,—a cup or saucer of grotesque shape would excite his imagination, and become, by association with times and places, invested with a special importance. Those queer objects which he used to pick up on the stalls of the old Quais and in *bric-à-brac* shops suggested to him various stories, and, indeed, often formed the nucleus of his tales ; so, from his point of view, it was not an extravagance to buy them. He actually felt that to become possessed of them was an absolute necessity. No wonder this insatiable giant wanted money, much money !

## I MEET CHARLES DICKENS

I REMEMBER meeting Charles Dickens one afternoon in my mother's *salon* in Paris. He had on a wonderful embroidered waistcoat, a flamboyant necktie, and a gorgeous watch-chain. He pinched my fat cheeks, and I slapped his hand. I recollect him saying to my mother, "Be sure always to have pretty nurses about your children. If I have an ugly person about me I am certain to get into their trick of ugliness; if anyone squints, I am sure to squint too; if one stammers, I am sure to stammer also. So be careful to surround your children with healthful and beautiful influences." I made a big grimace, and he made another, and then we both laughed merrily.

Charles Dickens was decidedly theatrical. I heard my mother say that she had gone to hear Dickens read one of his works. At that particular time he happened to be in her black books, so she made up her mind not to betray any sort of emotion at his reading. When she returned home she confessed that Dickens's reading was so remarkably powerful and dramatic that she alternately laughed and cried, exactly as he wished her to do. "He is a wonderful magician," my mother remarked.

## AUGUSTA HOLMES

### THE GREATEST WOMAN MUSICAL COMPOSER

I CAN just remember jolly old Captain Dalkeith Holmes. My father used to say that he had the reputation of being a great gossip and *raconteur*, that he had *La Chronique Scandaleuse* at his fingers' ends. His wife, who was a very accomplished woman, was my godmother. In their *salon* hung a large oil copy of David's famous picture of Napoleon crossing the Alps. The original is in the Louvre. This was executed by Mrs Dalkeith Holmes, the mother of the famous Augusta, the greatest woman musical composer of the age. It is curious that neither her father nor her mother liked music. Little Augusta used to say how hard it was for her to have such unmusical parents; when she played the piano her mother would rush out of the room. This little girl was born twenty years after the marriage of her parents, and almost from her birth showed a remarkable musical disposition. She was very frail and delicate. I recollect her being fed on minced meat, flavoured with fruit. I used, when a child, to think this a horrible mixture, and pitied her. She was dressed in an old-fashioned style, wearing a coal-scuttle bonnet, tied under her chin with a big bow of ribbon. Though my god-



mother was not handsome, she looked *une grande dame*. She had been a fearless and a splendid horsewoman—had ridden on horseback from Fontainebleau to Florence, and had published an account of her adventures.

Their *salon* was furnished in an unique fashion. The Captain was a great collector of rare books, especially in antique bindings. Curious quarto volumes were there, waifs and strays of chateaux and episcopal libraries wrecked in revolutions. The furniture chiefly consisted of book-cases, the walls being lined with books. Captain Holmes was also fond of old armour, the space between the case top and ceiling was adorned with shields and coats of mail, from amid which busts of heroes and philosophers gave a museum-like appearance to the place. The Captain carved ruins in cork, not bad achievements, which were placed in great, oak stands. My parents have told me that the Holmes received a great deal of society; they met there representatives of different countries, and different classes of people—aristocratic, financial, diplomatic, *monde*, but especially the literary world. Le Comte Alfred de Vigny was an *habitué*. My mother used to say the conversation there was “supreme.” There was no card playing, no music, and the refreshments were slight. The French are remarkable talkers, they enjoy the art of conversation; the language lends itself so readily to frothy bubbles, bright with colours. They can roll off easily without stop or stammer all sorts of ideas, wittily and pithily expressed.

At the Holmes’s reception my parents told me they

had met Auguste Barbier, who had translated "Julius Cæsar." This poet was a queer, boisterous Breton. Also Hector Berlioz, the great musical composer, who used to illustrate his melodies by a strange buzzing, more like an instrument than a human voice. My father said that it used to thrill them, for they felt they were in the presence of a man of genius. His music was not as much appreciated then as it is now.

Augusta was a handsome girl, and had masses of bright golden hair and lovely blue eyes. At an early age she became a distinguished member of the musical world ; her compositions were played at Les Concerts Populaires in Paris ; and an opera by her, *La Montagne Noire*, was performed at the Grand Opera in Paris. I remember the band playing her compositions as the soldiers passed her house in the Rue de l'Orangerie, and the fair young figure at the window waving her acknowledgments of the compliment. Everyone in Versailles in those days knew Augusta Holmes. Her mother was dead, and she lived alone with her father in the stately, but somewhat gloomy, residence, with its books and its armour. She was fond of poetry, and she used to translate beautifully English verse into the somewhat conventional French metre. At one time she was devoted to Shelley, and dreamt of writing a great opera on one of his poems. Gounod and Wagner recognised her as a musical celebrity of a high order.

My father met the famous Swedish singer, Jenny Lind, in Paris, when still unknown to fame ; she was there in order to finish her musical education. A poor friend of my father, a teacher, was much struck by her

amiability, and at the request of this lady, who was in the same boarding-house, she sang the native ballads of her own country. The *garçon*, or rather the waiter, who used to bring in the dishes from the restaurant next door, was wild with delight and wonder at the angelic voice. The poor fellow would linger outside the door, where he was often found with tears trickling down his cheeks. Everybody in the pension was enthusiastic about the voice, and wondered who she could really be.

When Jenny Lind, years after, visited Paris with Mrs Grote, she was then in the zenith of her fame. My mother hastened to call and congratulate her, and found her just as unaffected and amiable,—she seemed quite unchanged.

My brother William's godmother was a Mrs Nicholls, who in her youth had been so remarkable as an Irish beauty that the people in Dublin would wait outside her house in order to see her going out for an audience drive. When she went to the theatre, or for a walk, people would stand on the benches to catch a glimpse of her lovely face. She had heaps of marriage proposals, but being vain and ambitious she declared that she would not marry anyone without a title or a handle to his name. She had a presentiment that a duke or a Lord-Lieutenant would ask her in marriage, but she was disappointed. No one with a title came forward, and at the age of forty-three she consented to marry a Major Nicholls, who had a wooden leg. When I knew her she was a cross old lady, with hardly any trace left of her wonderful beauty.

## D É J A Z E T

I RECOLLECT as a child meeting the famous actress Déjazet. She was then an old woman, and yet she acted with zest, audacity and captivating brilliancy. She was acting, as usual, men's parts, chiefly the notorious Duc de Richelieu when a youth, and she still looked a precocious, clever, malicious boy.

Déjazet was a child of the eighteenth century. Her presence recalled the age of Voltaire, of Sophie Arnauld, etc., and the very wicked courtiers of Louis XV. She was really adapted in every respect for portraying a time which cloaked its features under a captivating brilliancy. Her popularity was unbounded, and was sustained by the well-known generosity of her character. She once rendered my father an important service, and that with the most amiable promptitude.

As I have mentioned, he was a newspaper correspondent, and in those days before the electric telegraph and Reuter had placed all journals in one respect upon an equality, the chief aim of "Our Own Correspondent" was to obtain, as far as possible, priority of news. Should he so be fortunate as to get something exclusive he had then to try to have it despatched with the utmost rapidity; he must not trust to the ordinary post. France was then singularly backward in her adoption of the railway. The correspondent had to

employ horse carriers, so that a despatch which Baron Reuter would with delightful impartiality divide with the whole Press of the land on payment of a moderate subscription, would, at the time in question, cost several hundreds of pounds. Upon the arrival of the Indian Mail Packet at Marseilles a despatch by ocean telegraph would be forwarded to the Foreign Office, that is, provided the atmosphere was clear and favourable. Copies of this despatch would be distributed to the different representatives of the Press. Sometimes all could share the expense of the courier. Exceptional cases arose occasionally, but leaving these aside the cost must have been very great to each newspaper, with its own special train of communications the whole way from India ; with correspondents in India, Egypt and Malta, and brought from there by special steamers to Paris, Boulogne and Dover. The annual outlay upon the transit of this Indian mail twice a month would now be incredible. When to this is added the frequent cost of couriers with extraordinary news, it will be admitted that the papers, if they did charge more than the omnipotent penny, spared no effort to give John Bull full value for his money.

My father once received instructions from headquarters that, according to arrangement, there would upon a particular day be placed in his hands a very important communication, which he was to take down by the *Malle Poste* and deliver to an agent who would be there waiting to receive it. The *Malle Poste* only carried two, and those two places were much coveted in a carriage which with great rapidity made the journey in some hours. My father asked the name of the travellers

for that evening. The official muttered, "Mademoiselle Déjazet and her maid." My father knew that the famous actress was extremely good-natured, so he repaired to the apartment she occupied in the Palace Royal and rang the bell. The door was opened by a middle-aged woman. This was Mademoiselle Déjazet's confidential maid. My father told his story frankly, and in proof of his good faith opened the despatch for Mademoiselle Déjazet to read and assure herself of the genuineness of the application, adding that as her taking the despatch would spare him fifty francs he would be delighted to pay the fare of the maid. The maid took the message to her mistress, and returned with a lighted candle and a piece of sealing wax, requesting my father to seal the document, which Mademoiselle Déjazet would be most happy to deliver as required, at the same time declining to allow my father to pay the maid's fare.

The despatch was punctually handed to the agent in waiting, and carried off express to the office.



## CHARLOTTE CUSHMAN

ANOTHER person who in my childhood's time impressed and also rather terrified me was the gifted American actress, Charlotte Cushman. One evening I recollect my father and mother asked her if she would most kindly sing or recite something for them. The candles were not yet lit, the *salon* was in semi-obscurity, and it was time for us little ones to go to bed, but we begged to be allowed to listen.

Never shall I forget the sensation of awe, almost of terror, that thrilled, me. I cowered and clung to my mother with fear and wonder as I heard that tremendous volume of a voice, which was like a dozen deep-toned voices. She sang grandly that weird ballad of Kingsley, "Mary, Call the Cattle Home." The fear, the wonder expressed by us children evidently touched and delighted Miss Cushman, for she took me on her lap and in a burst of love kissed me. I remember her saying, "that such a touch of Nature, brought her more joy than the thunderous applause of the multitude."

Another person who about that time impressed me was Mr William Darley, a painter. He was graceful, with a classic face, aristocratic head and figure. He painted my mother's portrait. I have heard people say that he had a kind of reverent dread of falling short of

his own high ideal in art, was so fastidious, and had such a horror of imperfection, that he produced little, and, except to a circle of friends, was more or less unknown. But he seemed to me to be fretful, dissatisfied, severe to himself and to others. I recollect his saying to my mother, who was evidently speaking proudly of her children—

“Ah! you think your own particular geese are swans.”

I never liked him after what I considered a rude, ungrateful speech, for he was constantly dining at my mother's table; the least he could do was to say pleasant things about us, and not call us “her geese.”

He was tall, over six feet, and was generally seen walking with one of the smallest men I have ever seen, Monsieur Joseph Milsand, a very remarkable Frenchman, and an enthusiastic admirer of Robert Browning. He wrote several articles about the poet's works in *La Revue des deux Mondes*. These two men loved each other, united by intellectual gifts and severe consciences.

Another remarkable man, whom I just remember, who visited my mother about that time, was Mr Adolph Frank, an important personage—as he was then the best representation of Jewish intellect. He was a small, dark man of unmistakably Jewish face and figure, with eyes worn out by study, and yet so clear that no one could suspect how near to blindness they were.

My father told me that Mr Frank had laboured with Victor Cousin on a philosophical dictionary. He

was a member of the Institut, a professor of *droit naturel* at the Sorbonne, and became a member of the Council of the University. My father used to converse with him, and read his *Kabbala*. Referring to his own people Frank used to say very strikingly that the Jews were never, properly speaking, a nation. They were always subject to foreign rulers ; never an independent people, able to maintain a nationality amongst the superior Powers, much less of ever ruling dependent provinces. The Jews, he said, are a faith, a persistent undying faith. Though tremendously learned—a sage, in fact—he could mingle with society in quite a social, pleasant way.

## JESSIE WHITE MARIO

AMONGST all the folk who were received by my mother in her Paris *salon* none made a queerer impression on me than Jessie White. She was an English governess when I first caught a glimpse of her. She had very red hair, an extremely animated face, and a peculiarly excitable manner. She often sat cross-legged on the sofa, declaring that tyrants ought to be suppressed. As I was still a child she frightened me. She looked so wild that somehow I connected her with the devil, and could not conceive why my mother and kindly father received so extraordinary a woman.

One evening my mother gave a *soirée*; Jessie White appeared with an Italian flag in her hand and ribbons of Italian colours round her red hair. She looked like a haystack on fire.

She became an intimate friend of General Garibaldi, and so came in contact with Mazzini and Orsini and other Republican leaders. She was the enthusiastic ally of Garibaldi in the Italian War to shake off the Austrian yoke, and distinguished herself greatly as a kind of aide-de-camp to the General in many of the engagements. She was thrown into prison upon a charge of which she was ultimately acquitted. She then married Mario, an aide-de-camp of Garibaldi.

Jessie Mario also accompanied the General in his expedition against Sicily and Rome. She nursed the wounded soldiers in the hospitals; they were devotedly grateful to her, and always spoke of her as an angel.

Some years later she called at our London house with Menotti, Garibaldi's son, who was devoted to her. She was a strange woman, full of the wildest enthusiasm. I remember that she had a brother who frequently broke his leg, evidently there was something the matter with one of the bones. Jessie, who had surgical knowledge, always set the bone right.

I once saw Mazzini, but I had heard so much of his sanguinary doctrines that I hid myself in a cupboard, for I imagined that he carried a sword concealed about his person, and if I uttered anything he did not approve of he might kill me.

*A propos* of Jessie White Mario, I recollect my mother one afternoon, on her return from a visit to the Brownings in Paris, saying how Elizabeth Barrett Browning had found fault with some of Jessie Mario's doctrines.

"No one can love Italy more than I do," exclaimed Mrs Browning, "but be pitiful, oh, God! When Jessie White speaks I seem to see (Mrs Browning shuddered) scaffolds looming in the distance."

Then my mother described how Mrs Browning had brought her into the bedroom where her little boy was fast asleep. How carefully she held the candle, shading the light with her slim, delicate hands. How her wonderful dark eyes radiated with delight as she gazed upon her sleeping child.

“A solemn, tender scene,” said my mother to us.

“Is he not a little angel?” Mrs Browning whispered, with a tremulous voice. “Better than any poem, more precious than anything on earth, is my darling little Wiedemann” (The Present Pen).

Her smile was exquisitely touching.

“Love me always, love me much!” she exclaimed, when bidding good-bye to my mother.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning was certainly the most feminine of women—she loved devotedly.

“But when a soul by choice and conscience doth  
Throw out her full force on another soul,  
The conscience and the concentration both  
Make mere life, love. For love is perfect, whole,  
An aim consummated is love, in sooth.  
As Nature’s magnet heat rounds pole with pole.”



## MONSIEUR REMY'S COURS IN PARIS

My sister and I attended the celebrated classes presided over then by Monsieur Remy (successor of Royer Collard), the most famous teacher in Paris. His pupils belonged to every class of society. *The old Noblesse of Le Faubourg St Germain* was represented ; the daughters of members of the Imperial Court, *La Haute Finance*, and a sprinkling of *la Bourgeoisie*. When we were attending these *cours* there were a few other English girls, amongst them being the Ritchies. One is now the wife of the present Vice-Provost of Eton, Mr Warre Cornish, and her brother, Richmond, is the husband of Ann, eldest daughter of William Thackeray.

In each class we had from thirty to sixty girls. There were two *cours* every day of the week—one in the morning and one in the afternoon. The questions put to the pupils were generally *viva voce*, but sometimes they were answered in writing. The pupils who received most *jetons* (marks) got *presidences*, and at the end of the term these *presidences* were added up, and the girl who received the highest number had her name inserted in *Le Tableau d'Honneur*, which hung in the class-room.

These *cours* were like weekly battlefields ; such rivalries, jealousies, successes, failures. The emulation

was tremendous. I worked at high pressure often till late at night. I tied a wet towel round my head in order to keep myself awake, for I had made up my mind to attain the highest honour, that is, to have my name inserted in *Le Tableau d'Honneur*. Each class could have two names inscribed, those of the highest winners of the *presidences* (the card on which was the name of the girl who received the most *jetons*) signed by Monsieur Remy during the term. I had several rivals, but none worked as hard as I did then; I was possessed by a sort of frenzy to be the first. Monsieur Remy did not like a young Irish girl to constantly carry off the most *presidences*. We all sat at a long green baize table; Mr Remy held a wand. When asking questions he pointed this to the girl who had to answer. When he pointed to me he often tried to puzzle me by his difficult questions, and I fancied that a shade of something like annoyance spread over his face when I answered correctly. Then the great day arrived for counting up the *presidences* in my particular *cours*. I shall never forget how Monsieur Remy hummed and hawed, blew his nose and coughed loudly, then in a subdued voice announced to the class that in history and geography "*Perfide Albion*" had won a place in *Le Tableau d'Honneur* for that year; then he called my name out reluctantly, adding that it was a pity that an Irish girl was the best pupil.

The year following I scored a bigger triumph. Monsieur Remy gave the pupils a poem to write. We were to bring it in a fortnight, the subject being, "What had most impressed us in our young lives."

We had all been studying the rules of French

versification, which are exceedingly intricate. I recorded in verse a pathetic incident which had impressed me deeply.

A little boy, who inhabited with his parents the house next to ours at Versailles, where we had gone to spend the summer months, had met with a terrible accident which caused his death. On the previous day he and I and our servant had gone for a ramble in the woods of Satori. The sun shone brilliantly, the sky was deep blue, the trees and wild flowers were in their full glory. The boy questioned me about God, heaven and the angels. Curiously enough he remarked that he would like to see God and ask him many questions. He wondered why there was thunder—was it a sign of God's anger? Why did the sun shine? he asked. Was God smiling then?

The next morning the little fellow fell out of an open window, and I can never forget the agonising scream, the wail of pain, and then the intense stillness of death. A few days after the little coffin, covered with white flowers, slowly left the house, followed by the heart-broken parents to the final resting-place.

It was a melancholy subject, and I had felt it all deeply. But the rules of versification rather impeded my muse.

On the great day when the judgment was to be given I arrived late, having mislaid some lesson book. Monsieur Remy was already in his pulpit, which was only used on grand occasions. The hall was crammed with the mothers, sisters and governesses of the pupils; a few fathers were dotted here and there. It was an imposing assembly.

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Monsieur Remy was saying (just as I was taking my seat at the table) that, on the whole, the poems had disappointed him; so many of them were futile, were really about so little, that nothing had been *felt*, but there was one exception — one only. Then, clearing his throat and glaring at me, and shrugging his shoulders, he exclaimed,—

“Eh bien, encore la perfide Albion remporte la victoire.”

Then he called out my name. How my heart did thump! My ears buzzed, my cheeks burned, my throat was parched. The room, the people seemed to be dancing about; I neither could see nor hear what Monsieur Remy was saying. He again glared at me, and I felt that he was annoyed with me for being the successful candidate. He then read my verses.

When he finished there was a murmur of approbation. “How sad, but how prettily written.” Then people stared and smiled at me.

It was a triumph for a very young Irish girl to have written the best poem amongst fifty French girls.

## A DROWNING INCIDENT IN THE SEINE

My sisters and I were taking swimming lessons in Les Bains de la Seine. It was summer. We wore dark blue serge costumes. One morning the baths were particularly full of women and children. The current being strong carried me away to that part of the water reserved for good swimmers. I could not swim, and I vividly recollect the moment of agony when I felt myself going down to the bottom. I rose three times, and then I gave one shrill cry. My younger sister, I heard afterwards, had missed me. She, fortunately, told the swimming master and some lady that she believed I was under the water, and would be drowned if no one went to my rescue.

When I regained consciousness I was lying on a couch, a woman was rubbing me with hot flannels, brandy was being poured down my throat, and I heard the doctor say, after feeling my pulse, that I had very narrowly escaped being drowned.

The last thing I remembered when I was in the water was hearing my mother saying to me,—

“Now, why tell a fib? You did eat that fig, for I can see a bit of the skin on your teeth.”

My mother had lately given a dinner party, and had engaged a servant-man for the occasion. When the dessert was laid out on the dining-room table I had

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slipped in unawares and eaten a luscious green fig. When it was missed I not only said that I had not eaten it, but allowed them to believe that the new servant had gobbled it up ; but when my mother was speaking to me she noticed the green skin on my teeth.

In the act of drowning this incident came vividly to my mind, and my mother's voice hissed in my ear, " Why tell a fib ? "

Ever since that time I have never enjoyed boating or bathing in the sea—the terror I felt for a few minutes then takes possession of me—but now if I did fall into the water and were nearly drowned, there would indeed be a tremendous procession of sins ! The fig incident would be a mere trifle.

A few years ago I intended taking a sea voyage with friends, and had written, but not posted, the letter about retaining a berth on board the vessel, when, that afternoon, I met a lady palmist. After looking carefully at my hand she said, impressively,—

" Do not take a long sea voyage ; it is curious, but I see the drowning line marked plainly on your hand."

She had never been told of my narrow escape ; her warning impressed me. I cancelled the engagement I had made for this sea voyage, but repented it later, as my friends had a delightful trip. The sea had been calm, and there was no accident nor *contretemps* of any kind.



## A VISIT TO PORT ROYAL

THIS period was the happiest in my life. I was interested in my studies, especially in drawing. I had also lessons from a German, whose face was like a turbot, with goggly eyes, large mouth and no chin. A portrait I drew of him in pencil proved that I had the gift of taking likenesses.

Every Saturday my father, mother, and old Mr Browning and Miss Browning (the father and sister of the poet) and we three elder children went for an expedition in the *environs* of Paris and Versailles. I remember one to "Port Royal" which I thoroughly enjoyed, because old Mr Browning had told me all about the famous Port Royalists. He showed me the farmhouse where Racine and Pascal lived and wrote; the fountain by which La Mere Angelique loved to sit; the cemetery and the crosses; the lonely spot where the nuns assembled around a crucifix in the wood. In the house there was a collection of old pictures of the celebrities connected with Port Royal which interested Mr Browning. Then we drove to Dampierre, a fine old *château* belonging to Le Duc de Luynes, with delicious green drives and stately avenues.

Another expedition I enjoyed was going to Fontenay aux Roses and Sceaux, where we all had

dinner in an old tree called "Robinson." The table was fastened on to the branches.

Life was then indeed like a long summer day. I was the incarnation of jollity and *insouciance*. I had one day a quarrel with a young Pole who used to spend Sundays at our house. He teased me because I had Irish blood in my veins. I retorted by saying that he, also, belonged to a conquered nation. We both lost our tempers. I got so wild that I administered a smack across his cheek, so he had a black eye. I never saw him again till twenty years after, when he was introduced at a big London "At Home." He had not forgotten the impetuous little girl who had slapped him with so much violence.

## MONSIEUR LÈON DE WAILLY

AUTHOR OF "STELLA AND VANESSA," "ANGELICA  
KAUFFMAN," ETC.

THIS charming man, in his day a celebrated writer, was, when I was a little girl, a hero of mine. It was he who rescued me from my humiliating position in the dirty linen clothes' bag, into which I had been tightly tied by my odious music mistress. He it was who cut the Gordian knot, so he called himself ever afterwards my Perseus. His face reminded one of the portraits by Titian, Francia or Sebastian del Piombo—the black, glossy hair, the soft but penetrating dark eyes, the regular chiselled features, the warm ivory skin. There was a shade of melancholy on his handsome countenance which made it more attractive.

My father has often talked to me about his old friend, and remarked that Lèon de Wailly's writings were like his talk—bright, rapid, terse sentences, so clear in meaning. He was truly witty ; his epigrams were not prepared beforehand. With us little girls he was playful and kindly ; he won and retained affection. He had suffered from a great misfortune, which he bore with heroic fortitude. My father related to me, years after Monsieur de Wailly's death, the following interesting episode in his life :—

Lèon de Wailly's uncle left a large fortune, but

only a small bequest to his nephew. Lèon de Wailly's wife, under some lamentable misguidance, produced a paper which proved to be a forgery ; had it been real it would have entitled her husband to a large sum of money. She and her accomplices were tried, but although at first it was thought more than probable that her husband must have had some knowledge of the fraud, yet the closest investigation failed to discover a trace of guilt, and Lèon de Wailly was not even in the act of accusation. He believed his wife to be equally innocent, and this so firmly that the verdict of guilty brought against her fell upon him with such terrible unexpectedness that, in a fit of despair, he was with difficulty prevented from throwing himself out of the window towards which he rushed. When restored to himself his friends urged him to seek a legal separation. His wife begged for an interview, and such was her ascendancy over him that she persuaded him to forgive an act prompted, as she declared, entirely by her love for her husband. It was his uncle, she said, who was the real criminal by being so unnatural. She was a little woman, with a sweet infantine look. She succeeded in obtaining her husband's forgiveness, and she so excited his sympathy that he resolved to stay with her, and by some arrangement managed to find a room in the prison for himself close to where his wife was confined. In order to employ his mind he wrote his novel of *Angelica Kauffman*.

This famous artist had been, as is well known, deceived into marriage with an impostor, an incident in her life which forms the foundation of this romance. When the six months' imprisonment had expired, and

the wife liberated, poor Lèon de Wailly found that all his friends, though ready to welcome him, would no longer receive his wife—all repudiated her. What it was possible to do for her he did. His life was one of hard work.

Gifted as Lèon de Wailly was with creative powers, it was upon his ability as a translator of English authors that he was obliged mainly to depend for filthy lucre. The French are indebted to him for their acquaintance with works which few indeed could have rendered at all; amongst others the poems of Robert Burns—a most difficult task—and yet De Wailly succeeded admirably. My father gave me the following translation of “My Wife’s a Winsome Wee Thing”—which I think delicious :—

“C’est une charmante petite créature,  
C’est une belle petite créature,  
C’est une jolie petite créature,  
Que ma chère petite femme ;  
Je n’en ai jamais vu de mieux  
Je n’en ai jamais aimé mieux  
Et contre mon cœur je la porterai  
De peur de perdre mon joyau.

C’est une charmante petite créature  
C’est une belle petite créature,  
C’est une jolie petite créature  
Que ma chère petite femme.  
Nous partageons les tracas du monde,  
Ses luttes et ses soucis  
Avec elle, je les supporterai joyeusement  
Et croirai mon lot divin.”

Such a translation is itself originality. Lèon de Wailly also entered into the subtle humour of Sterne, and, later, the broad humour of Carleton.

The character of Dean Swift had keenly excited his interest. Lèon de Wailly had a hatred of hypocrisy—so had the witty Dean—(surely that extraordinary man could not have been the mere misanthropic savage created by extracts from pieces of satire of unbridled fierceness, and poetical squibs of an indecency too common at that time)—therefore de Wailly took up the story of the Dean's intercourse with *Stella and Vanessa*, and produced a novel of remarkable beauty and power.

When my father and mother first met Lèon de Wailly at Le Comte Alfred de Vigny's *salon* he was collecting materials for his *Stella and Vanessa*, and, as my parents were both Irish, they were able to help him, not only with facts of life and conduct, but with a topographical description of Swift's living of Lavacor in the county of Meath.

The novel when finished was, like most works of the kind, published as the *feuilleton* of a leading newspaper, *Le Courier Français*. It was afterwards translated into English.

A skilful dramatist, Muller, with de Wailly's aid, made the novel into a play. It was represented at the Odéon Theatre in Paris. Although not a failure, my father told me it was not a success.

He translated into French some of Swift's most powerful satires and racy pieces of irony, and published them under the title of *Opuscules humouristiques de Swift*. The few words with which de Wailly concludes his portrait of Swift are worthy of note, because they reveal his own opinions touching certain vices of the time as they appeared to himself :—\*

\* From my father's note-book.



“ When such a character is to be judged we should go beneath the surface ; let us understand the irony that may be in behaviour as well as in language ; let us not calumniate the beneficent misanthropist ; let us rather call Misanthropist the Alcestes (Molière’s hero in the *Misanthrope*). We overlook certain faults in soldiers ; we pardon their bluntness of manner ; we do not require the virtue of the anchorite from those who defend us sword in hand. Well, ecclesiastic as Swift was, and although he refused the commission offered to him by King William in a cavalry regiment, Swift was a warrior. His pen was a sword that struck down many enemies, won many battles, and saved his country from tyranny. But the spirit of party was implacable. We see opposing armies agree to a truce, and even to make peace. The spirit of party knows neither one nor the other. True it is that parties themselves die, and that genius is destined to survive them. But Swift had the imprudence to put his foot upon a hydra more dreadful still, and more vivacious than party spirit itself. This hydra bears the English name of *Cant*, meaning social falsehood, hypocrisy, an enemy that neither dies or pardons. A book of martyrs might be composed of those who have ventured to speak the open truth.

LÈON DE WAILLY.”

In his last novel, *Les deux Filles de Monsieur Dubreuil*, Lèon de Wailly contrasted the lives of two girls, one brought up in England and the other in France. With his usual love of truth the author shows how each system may under fairly favourable circumstances turn out well.

There was one point in the social life of England which won his sincere approval, *i.e.*, the freedom allowed to girls before marriage with respect to the choice of a husband, upon which their future happiness must mainly depend. Without making an open attack upon the system which he least admires, De Wailly, with artistic tact, paints a picture of open candour and freedom, calculated to win the preference which he must not dogmatically assert.

I have often heard both my father and mother remark on De Wailly's delicate wit ; and here I may as well record what my father used to say about the absence of humour in French literature with the exception of Rabelais and of Montaigne. The stupendous genius and power of Victor Hugo is never relieved by even a flash of fun ; Balzac's terrible analyses of Society conduce more to mourning than to mirth. There is no humour in George Sands's novels, none in Lamartine—certainly none in Zola.

## LE COMTE ALFRED DE VIGNY

It was at the *salon* of the celebrated author of *Cinq Mars*, *La Maréchale d'Ancre*, *Chatterton*, that my father and mother met the most illustrious people of that time, of which the Count Alfred de Vigny was the most distinguished. He was one of the earliest chiefs of the Romantic School. Not being a prolific writer, he is not so widely known or as popular as Victor Hugo and Alexandre Dumas, yet he was not less well known and appreciated by men of letters of all countries, while in France the exquisitely chiselled beauty of his style raised his works to the rank of classics.

When my father first knew him (before my birth) de Vigny and some of his literary friends were devoted to the study of Shakespeare. He rendered *Othello* in rhymed form, and it was produced at the Théâtre Français. The success achieved by *Othello* encouraged de Vigny to follow up with *The Merchant of Venice*.

Then de Vigny came forward as the chief of the Romantic School with *La Maréchale d'Ancre*. His principal personage was Concini, one of those favourites whom the Queen, Marie de Medici, brought in her train from Florence, and on whom she conferred rank and power. When at the summit of his power he is struck down by a popular rising instigated by his foes.

His deadly foe is Bosgia ; they draw swords in perfect darkness ; they both fall. Torchlights appear lighting the way of the *Maréchale* to the place of execution. By these torches she recognises her husband, and the man who once loved her and had risked his own life to save her two children from the mob thirsting for their blood. This was a climax strong enough to satisfy the great chief of the school, Victor Hugo himself.

In manner Alfred de Vigny was the most refined and gentle of men. His tastes were aristocratic ; he was an officer of the Garde Royale. This revolutionary leader of literature remained ever faithful to the old *régime*.

When I was a baby, my mother has often related how De Vigny rocked my cradle, humming old ballads to send me to sleep. I remember him well ; to us little girls he was always so kindly and courteous ; he was carefully dressed, quite *un gentilhomme*, with a charming smile and a quiet dignified manner, so different from the ordinary gesticulating Frenchman, whose head, shoulders, arms and features are seldom in repose. Le Comte Alfred de Vigny's courteous manner, tinged with his high-bred gallantry of the old *régime*, had for me a peculiar fascination ; there was a halo of romance about him that almost idealised his demeanour towards life, literature, women and children. When he, as was his wont, used to deposit a kiss on my little hand, it made me think of the *preux chevaliers* I had read of in my French story-books. His face, as I still remember it, though not striking, bore the unmistakable stamp of high-breeding and thought ; his small blue eyes had a shrewd,

penetrating expression ; he wore his hair rather long, falling in curls about his neck, as he used to say was the fashion of the old Franks. He always called me "Henriette d'Angleterre." My sister, who was fair, delicate, pretty and *câline*, he called Ophelia. To us little girls this deferential homage was flattering, and we strove in his presence to appear at our best.

His voice was thin, but well modulated, his utterance very precise ; there was quite a *souçon* of the faded *beau* about him. I can see him still sitting in one of our big arm-chairs soliloquising, generally with half-closed eyes, as if looking into the depths of his own mind. His talk was nearly always upon some literary topic ; he rigidly eschewed politics and scandal. Though a poet he did not care for the country ; he adored Paris in all seasons. I remember one day my astonishment at hearing him remark, as he stepped on our balcony, "What a charming view of chimney pots ! I adore these chimneys. Yes, the smoke of Paris is far more beautiful to me than the solitudes of woods, lakes, and mountains."

I have often been told that his greatest enjoyments were *causerie* and *rêverie*. He would set out after dinner, drop in at the *foyer* of Le Théâtre Française, where a circle would gather round the author of those fine dramas, *Chatterton* and *La Maréchale d'Aniae*, to listen to his delightful talk. Then he would turn in to his intimate friends' houses after midnight, and chat away in his interesting fashion till the small hours ; after this he would return to his apartment in Rue des Écuries d'Artois, and sit during his hours of inspiration at his desk,

with the blinds closed against the dawn, retiring to bed about five or six in the morning. He had a fire always in his study, a curious peculiarity of the old soldier to whom all seasons out of doors were alike, while at home he lived the life of a hothouse plant. He could not bear an open window, even in a crowded room, and yet to the end of his fairly long life he preserved a singular look of juvenility.

I remember one late afternoon M. de Vigny coming to my mother's *salon* (we then lived in La Rue d'Amsterdam), and being much amused at the behaviour of two Englishmen who happened to come in. They had not been introduced, so neither addressed the other. My father has often told me what De Vigny said then.

"How strange that when two Englishmen meet for the first time they should eye each other like a couple of strange bull-dogs ; they seem more ready to fly at each other's throats than to shake hands ; they slink away and sniff as if they scented hostility."

Monsieur A. de Vigny lived a life of Spartan simplicity. His apartment was small ; the drawing-room furniture was covered with dull, red chintz ; on the chimney-piece stood a white marble clock, and vases ; there was an old grand piano, a few arm-chairs, a divan ; that was all, with the exception of a few full-length portraits, one of which was Machiavelli. Close by the *salon* was his study, furnished with a bureau, a leather arm-chair and books. One servant, a woman, was the sole domestic.

Madame de Vigny, English by birth, was a queer old lady, much older than her celebrated husband, primitive



and kind, but the very antithesis of one's notions of a poet's wife. She was a sort of Mrs Malaprop in her way, assuring people, with a smile, that they of course were "excluded in her invitations" meaning "included"; that others were as "proud as Luther," instead of Lucifer. To his odd, old wife Monsieur de Vigny was always kind and courteous. I remember his addressing her as "*Ma chère* Lydia."

One evening I went with my father to the De Vignys, and brought my first shaded drawing to show Le Comte Alfred, who took a special interest in my education.

He looked at my work long and critically, advised me not to waste my time shading, but to do outline drawings from the face and figure. He said he admired the works of Ingres because of the purity and perfection of the line. He showed me some beautiful drawings illustrating his fine poem "*Eloa*," the Angel of pity who sprang from the tear Christ shed at Lazarus's grave. He presented me that evening with a copy of his dramas, writing on the fly leaf in his bold handwriting :—

"À Henriette d'Angleterre souvenir de mon héréditaire affection,  
"ALFRED DE VIGNY."

He was a little over sixty when I remember him best. He had not published for more than twenty years. He was very fastidious, and, as he expressed it, "approached his literary work with meditation and prayer." My father told me that when De Vigny was writing his drama *Chatterton* he

often fainted from excess of emotion. This play was written as a plea for the friendless poet of whom he took that English youth to be the type ; his fate was to be a warning against the neglect of society. In his preface he writes : " I now finish this entire work in the silence of a seventeenth night of toil. The moil of each day hardly interrupted it, and without flattery the words flowed into the mould which my thought has hollowed out. Now that the work is finished I tremble under the sufferings it has caused me, and in meditation as holy as prayer think over it with sadness, asking myself if it be not useless, or if it will be listened to by my fellow-men. My heart shrinks within me, as I consider how long a time it takes for the simplest ideas to penetrate the hearts of all."

Alfred de Vigny was a friend and champion of the poor, struggling man of letters, and such was the advanced civilisation of Paris that to the workmen of the Faubourg, literary merit was as dear as to the autocrats of the Faubourg Germain. *Chatterton*, I have heard, was a tremendous success. The students hailed De Vigny as their champion. The author was fortunate in having that very great artist, Madame Dorval, who played the part of Kitty Bell. This actress was all soul, and as I heard people say of her, " She had *les larmes dans la voix*."

The joys of De Vigny's life lie in those two words—*rêverie* and *causerie*. "Thinking and conversation" will not do. *Rêverie* is not the mental working out of some problem, nor is it wide-awake dreaming. It is perhaps the indulgence of spontaneous images as they happen to arise, and especially form themselves

from associations belonging to one's own personal experience—a chewing of the cud of sweet and bitter fancies. It is no brooding either over one's troubles ; rather, on the contrary, an enjoyment of the actual present.

However *rêverie* is to be explained, it was the state De Vigny could only exchange for *causerie*. Conversation sounds too stiff and formal, gossip too low, chat perhaps comes nearest. Let us say that between friends *causerie* might be called the blended *rêverie* of two or three, taking outward expression in the frank and cordial emission of all sorts of ideas and fancies, anecdotes, criticisms, banter—even philosophy is not excluded. For Monsieur de Vigny this *causerie* was the wine of life ; his mode of life was determined by his love of it. He would sit out after dinner, and unless engaged otherwise, would drop in at the *foyer* of Le Théâtre Français, or where a circle would be gathered to hear his delightful talk.

My father and mother have often related how he would drop in to pay them a visit after midnight. His great historical romance of *Cinq Mars* raised for him a world-wide reputation. It went into several editions, and was translated into most living languages.

When De Vigny was elected a member of the Academy he entered his earthly paradise. To meet such *causeurs* as De Villemans, De Remusat and his friend Thiers, his match at his own weapon, and one or other of the illustrious forty, was for Alfred de Vigny the summit of happiness. It was he who was the means of preventing a great injustice to a man who subsequently achieved distinction, the late Abbé

Gratry. As one of the committee charged to report upon the Abbé's work, he was struck by the remarkable beauty of the writer's style. Had De Vigny allowed himself to look upon the book as that of a priest, he, owing to his own sceptical turn, might have treated it with negligence. But where literature was concerned no mind was more Catholic. He loved art for art's sake, and in Gratry he recognised a true writer. Whatsoever the doctrine may have been, the form was truly perfect, and so like the pleader before the Areopagus, who made beauty plead its own cause, he rang the eloquent pages on the ears of the prejudiced judges and won the prize.

De Vigny's purse—and it was not a well-furnished one—was never closed, and he gave what many men grudged more, his time and influence in trying to find suitable occupation for poor aspirants to fame. In fact, at a comparatively early age, he almost ceased to write; like Rossini, he stopped in the zenith of his fame. It was the wonder of his many friends and admirers that a man, to whom all the theatres were open, and whom booksellers and publishers besieged, and a man by no means indolent, should have contented himself with an occasional poem, or an article in *La Revue des deux Mondes*; and this only in aid of his persistent idea, that the State ought to provide for struggling poets. The other explanation offered by his friends was hardly satisfactory—that he feared to compromise his high reputation by works that might fall short of those which had found such high favour.

I went three or four times with him to the

Louvre. It was a treat to him to talk over the pictures he liked best. The Salle Carrée du Louvre was a favourite resort of his. He knew every work there by heart. It was Alfred de Vigny who first urged me, as soon as I could draw, to learn pastel; the elegance and delicacy of this branch of art specially charmed him.

I remember his stopping before a pastel of Rosalba at the Louvre, and exclaiming in his soft, gentle voice : “ Ah ! it is only in pastel that an artist can faithfully render the bloom on a young girl’s cheek, and the down on a butterfly’s wing.”

I must conclude by giving the substance of a few notes written to me when I was a girl of about twelve or thirteen. It seems a pity to translate them, as it is not possible to render into English the graceful *tournure* of his French phrases.

The following letter is an answer to a request of mine asking him to recommend a little play for acting purposes :—

“ DEAR HENRIETTE D’ANGLETERRE,—Beware of losing time, which ought to be precious to you, in filling your memory with the trivial, silly comedies that have too frequently been written for young people. This sort of morality in action, in the style of Berquin and his followers, is good for nothing, not even for teaching the language. There was once upon a time a great poet in France, who was asked by the Court to write something amusing for Louis XIV. He wrote a masterpiece for the little girls of St Cyr. Learn it by heart, you will never forget it, and even



unconsciously you will always have the words upon your tongue ; study the parts of Esther. Some evening you will come and recite them to me. It is by learning such parts, written in French verse, that your pronunciation will become pure and lose all trace of accent. Our actors, French though they be, when they act prose parts forget, transpose, stammer, sputter with impunity, but poetry obliges them to count the twelve feet of each line. and the syllables of each word, and to give correctly the most musical expression of our language.

“For you, dear little English girl, it will be the best training ; if there were still ‘Des Demoiselles de St Cyr’ I should like to place you there, under the direction of Madame de Maintenon, who always impresses me as an excellent schoolmistress. Good-night, dear little Henriette d’Angleterre, be a good girl, believe me and believe in me,

“ALFRED DE VIGNY.”

The next is about a fancy ball for children. Monsieur de Vigny designed my costume (a *soubrette*):—

“Here is the album ; I hope I am obedient. I was already sufficiently guilty in going out the day it came into your dear little head to come and see Lydia. Wear two pretty skirts—a *couleur de rose* one, and a sky-blue—high-heeled shoes with silver buckles, and a cross worthy of Henriette d’Angleterre.

“Good-bye, good-night,

“ALFRED DE VIGNY.”



The following was sent with autograph verses I had asked for a friend of mine :—

“Here are some verses for your young friend. You did not come to my house to take them, so they will have to go and find a little Henriette d’Angleterre whom I saw the day she was born in France, and who took me for her mother a few days after.

“You see how good it is when one is a woman to say, *I will!* with a little decided air. Nothing charms us Frenchmen so much as feeling that great importance is attached to what we do.

“Forgive our vanities, dear child, and pray for us!

“ALFRED DE VIGNY.”

## RICHARD COBDEN, M.P.

WHEN this great man happened to be in Paris, I recollect his joining us children in a game of Blind Man's Buff. He caught me so often that I accused him of seeing through the handkerchief tied round his eyes. He answered that as I happened to be the fattest little girl in the room, he managed to find me out. His voice was soft, the expression of his face kindly, his manner most sympathetic. He often spoke to us children, and would listen gravely, seriously and encouragingly to our talk. I was surprised to hear that he was a great politician, he was always so simple and charming.

I remember that Mr Cobden invited us and many other children, numbering about twenty, to visit the *Château des Tuileries*. He had received an order to inspect the splendid palace. We all mounted inside four *fiacres*. When we arrived at the gates, Mr Cobden got out first, and had a talk with a big *gardier* in a cocked hat, and we heard him remark,—

“Though *une famille Anglaise* is often a very large one, this number was impossible; he could not admit more than ten children.”

I can never forget Mr Cobden's abashed look. He was so sorry for those who could not be admitted. I

was amongst the rejected, and to console me for my disappointment he sent me next day a big box of *bonbons*.

At his country place, Dunford (in Sussex), there was great liberty. Once the son of a neighbouring clergyman came to spend the day. He had the pony chaise harnessed, then let the pony fall down, and broke its knees. The boy was deeply dejected and sat sobbing on the staircase. Mr Cobden consoled him by saying that he did not want to sell the pony, and therefore it did not matter if the value was lessened, and he gave him half-a-crown and told him to cheer up!

Mr Cobden's power of concentration was remarkable; he did his work with all his family round him. Once one of his little daughters rushed into the room with a pinafore full of young rabbits, which she placed on his writing-table amongst his papers, but he was not disturbed, he gently removed them, placing the rabbits on the floor, and continued his writing.

I was amused to hear him tell my mother in Paris an incident concerning little rice cakes which he was particularly fond of, and had daily for his luncheon. The servant man who bought them for Mr Cobden charged him eight sous each (fourpence). After he left, the next servant charged him six sous (three-pence); Mr Cobden thinking that he had found a cheaper *pâtissier* made no remark; but when the third servant, a simple, straightforward country fellow only put three sous on the bill (a penny halfpenny) for the identical rice cake, then Mr Cobden thought that he would call at the shop and find out what was really the price of his favourite *gateau de riz*.

“Three sous” (penny half-penny), answered the woman at the counter, “that is the only price.”

So the servant from the country had been the only domestic too honest to cheat him.

Mr Cobden’s manner was quiet, but there was often an amused twinkle in his brown eyes.

My father has often remarked that Mr Cobden was the best of listeners. He sought for information from all persons of every rank and degree. He captured every one by all the knowledge in his possession. It was owing to this gift that Mr Cobden knew so well the state of every country, and it was his certainty that enabled him to express his opinion in that unhesitating way which has so impressed his opponents. At Midhurst (Sussex) he used to sit on the counter and talk to the Radical tailor there. Cobden was a genial companion, who never departed from kindly ways except to save a lost cause, or uphold a menaced principle. My father spoke with enthusiasm of this admirable man. Such a combination of stern morality with a lovable manner was unique.

His wife was, when I saw her, one of the prettiest women I have ever beheld, with beautiful brown eyes and prematurely white hair, which then looked powdered. She was like a pastel, so soft and yet vivid in colouring. They had four daughters, and one son who died in his boyhood at a school abroad. The second daughter, Mrs Cobden-Sickert, is the author of a remarkable novel: *The Wistons*. She is the only one of his daughters who bears a striking likeness to her illustrious father.

## DOCTEUR EDMOND DE PRESSENSÉ —EUGÈNE BERSIER

ON Sundays we attended the services in La Chapelle Taitbout, where the two celebrated Pasteurs, Docteur Edmond de Pressensé and Eugène Bersier preached. The French Protestant world might well be proud of these two remarkable men.

Monsieur de Pressensé was a distinguished historian—his *Les trois premiers Siècles des Christianisme*, etc., have made their mark. He was also an ardent politician, and held the responsible post of *Senateur*. His wife, who died a year or so ago, was a well-known writer for girls, and many of her stories have been translated into English. She was the shyest person I have ever met ; people frightened her as a rule, and with strangers, she was like one petrified.

Monsieur Edmond de Pressensé was a plain man, but his intelligent dark eyes, at times so full of fire, redeemed his sallow face and ill-shapen features from absolute ugliness. His figure was not graceful ; he dressed carelessly, wearing baggy trousers and ill-fitting coats ; but notwithstanding these personal disadvantages, the moment he opened his mouth he fascinated and convinced all those who heard him. His flow of words was remarkable ; he spoke with astonishing

rapidity, as if the thoughts came too quickly and were too powerful to wait for proper figures of speech. He stammered at times ; it was like a torrent that could not contain itself. He never thought of himself, or of producing an effect. He absolutely forgot his own identity ; he was submerged in the sublimity of his ideas.

I sometimes have had, when a young girl, the privilege of spending evenings at the De Pressensé house, and the greatest of my treats was to hear him talk about books, men, politics, etc.

Standing on the hearthrug, with his back to the cheerful log-wood fire, surrounded by friends, he would talk eloquently, throw out words, sometimes scathing, at other times full of heartfelt admiration for noble deeds done or books written. He praised generously. One felt when he spoke that he was not only learned, but above all a genuinely sincere, high-minded, enthusiastic man.

His wife, though so reserved, was warm-hearted and intellectual. Their children were gifted.

Monsieur de Pressensé's absence of mind was a constant source of amusement and anxiety to his family. He was always forgetting. I recollect one afternoon calling at their house and finding the staircase deluged with water. Monsieur de Pressensé had been to a fountain in the kitchen, and had turned the tap, which he forgot to stop.

I was told that one morning he received the news of the birth of a grand-child while still in bed. He got up in a hurry in order to send off a telegram to his daughter. He was seen rushing down the



street, without trousers ; his costume consisting of a great-coat, a hat, and a pair of boots.

When he appeared in the pulpit he was often untidy, little white strings peeping out here and there. He lived in a world of great ideas, and of noble aspirations. He evidently forgot for the time being that he was addressing a congregation.

I liked him because, when not on the heights, he was so human and simple. How often I have smiled when I have seen Monsieur de Pressensé in a pastry cook's shop in Paris, smacking his lips, while devouring cream-cakes.

He died a few years ago, after great physical suffering. His wife, who survived him, became blind. She is now also dead. Their son, Francis de Pressensé, is the brilliant writer and editor of *Le Temps* ; their two daughters are married to *pasteurs* ; and one grand-daughter is the wife of a missionary in the Zambesi.

Monsieur Eugène Bersier was a great contrast to Edmond de Pressensé. He was studied and self-conscious, and was one of the handsomest men I have ever seen : like a bronze Apollo. He had perfectly chiselled features, grey eyes, deep set—*voilé* as the French say—veiled in thought. He was tall, stately, dignified, reserved in speech, collected in his thoughts, a perfect orator ; every phrase had been pondered over ; there was no wild rush of ideas ; everything that Mr Bersier uttered was clear, precise, and often cutting ; now and then he was scornful and passionate. He had beautiful hands, and was evidently aware of the fact, for they played a most effective part

in his sermons. Sometimes he would slowly brush back his thick brown hair when it fell over his forehead, or they would hang gracefully over the pulpit cushions ; sometimes he would place his right hand in his waistcoat, close to where the heart is located. His actions were calm and studied. He never let himself go, as De Pressensé did, in the heat of the moment, but kept himself well in hand. He seemed cold, even calculating in his actions ; but at times his eloquence was like that of an inspired young prophet, and his beauty and style were remarkable.

The chapel was always crowded to suffocation on the Sundays he preached at La Chapelle in L'Avenue de la Grande Armée ; unless one went early it was impossible to find a seat. Women especially besieged the chapel ; they were wild about Bersier, and would sit on the pulpit stairs.

When we knew him in Paris he was at the zenith of his fame. His wife was invited everywhere by Catholics as well as Protestants ; his lovely daughter married a millionaire ; the whole family was prosperous.

I heard that Monsieur Bersier had begun life in great poverty. His father died when he was quite a child, and his poor mother, in order to give her son a good education, had almost to deprive herself of the necessities of life. When the time came for Eugène Bersier to preach his trial sermon, the sermon which was to decide if he was gifted enough to be enrolled as a *pasteur*, he found that he did not even possess a decent shirt for the occasion, and he could not afford to buy a new one. What was he to do ? He had a good

friend who was the fortunate possessor of several good shirts. He was about his size. This friend envied some of Bersier's books ; he would go to him and offer to exchange a new shirt for a volume of history !

The friend agreed to this, but bargained for two volumes. Monsieur Bersier said he would think it over, and returned to his home with the new shirt.

The great day arrived. Eugène Bersier mounted the pulpit ; the church was crowded ; the young pastor's striking appearance made a decidedly favourable impression. There was a hush of expectation when he gave his text. Just then who should come in but the friend who had lent him the new shirt. Monsieur Bersier was then uttering some fervid, searching words ; the congregation was deeply attentive. Then the friend, who kept staring at Bersier, compelled him to look. The young pastor's eyes were seen to rove. The mischievous friend then pointed to the shirt, and put up two fingers, indicating the two volumes which he expected. The effect of this gesture was instantaneous and disconcerting at the same time, for Monsieur Bersier had a keen sense of the ridiculous. He had great difficulty in preventing himself from bursting out in a fit of laughter, which would have ruined his prospects. So, by an act of great self-control, he buried his face in his hands. The convulsive workings were supposed to be caused by excessive natural emotion. It produced an immense effect on the congregation, women wept, men blew their noses. When he resumed his discourse he had grown calm, and was able to keep his eyes steadily away from his fiendish friend.

## Docteur Edmond de Pressensé 99

In the days of his prosperity, when we knew the Bersiers, he related the interesting shirt episode with great point.

This brilliant *pasteur* died suddenly in the prime of life of heart disease.

Neither Dr Edmond de Pressensé or Monsieur Bersier have had successors to equal their reputation as orators.

## FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF LONDON

WE went to London for a time, as my father's affairs were rather in a bad state, and he wanted to look out for more congenial occupation. We had a little house in Brompton. How I hated the dismal unpicturesque surroundings. The English people struck me then as being dull and heavy. Everything was gloomy, after bright, beautiful Paris ; the murky greyness of the atmosphere, the ugliness of the shops, especially the butchers'. There was so much that was degrading and grovelling in some of the London streets that I recollect bursting into tears one afternoon when walking with my father in Knightsbridge. I was so Paris home-sick. I was not surprised to see so many public-houses full of poor people ; they appeared to be the only places where there was light, warmth, and sociability.

The charwoman who came every morning to help our two servants wore a plumed hat with cotton roses, a velvet beaded mantle, a torn skirt, boots with large holes, displaying her naked heels peeping from un-mended stockings. Such a sight I had never witnessed in Paris.

Our cook, an elderly woman with a red nose, could not cook anything as we wished it done. Her omelettes were leathery, she had only one way of

cooking potatoes—she boiled them in their skins. Never was there any flavour save that of hot water in the vegetables. We had eternal roly-polies, which reminded me of the limbs of dead babies. The puddings were of the simplest kind and flavourless. My brother used to call them “immaculate conceptions.” When we asked her for anything in the way of a French dish she would turn up her nose, give a toss to her head, and remark, “I do not ’old by foreign ways, Henglish I ham, and my cookings is Henglish, thank God !” There were no delightful pastry-cook shops, like Colombin or Guerre, etc., but only eternal Bath buns and jam puffs ! England was like its own roast beef, plum pudding, and porter—solid, respectable, but, oh ! so dull and heavy. France was like its champagne and omelette *soufflée* ; like its cuisine, light and deliciously flavoured ; perhaps not so good for one’s constitution, but I was too young to care about digestion. Then where could we go for a stroll in the evenings ? There were no brilliant Boulevards, no Champs Elysées, with its gay *cafés*, and the people loitering outside while sipping their beverage in the balmy atmosphere.

I attended the South Kensington Art School—a big, dreary, ugly building. I was made to copy from the flat ornaments and scrolls. How I loathed the uninteresting work ! Then I began shading apples and plums from the cast, black chalk lines crossed and recrossed like knitting. A mild, middle-aged, neat little lady teacher, with a timid step and timid voice, came twice a day to look at the work. She made a bread-pill, picked out the black spots in my shading, said, “Very nice, go on,” and that is all the teaching



I extracted from her. All the pupils executed the same dull routine—drawings. There was no enthusiasm, no life. However, I copied “The Laocoon” from the flat, and won a bronze medal, just like a large ginger-bread nut. “Old King Cole” (the late Sir Henry Cole) and Richard Redgrave, R.A., used to prowling about the building.

It seemed to me that the feeling for art, the divine afflatus, was absolutely out of it.

Elizabeth Thompson (the present Lady Butler) was studying in the life-school; her sketches of horses and soldiers were very spirited. Miss Strong (now Lady Dilke) was also a student. She was a good talker; and she struck me then as a clever young woman. She had light, grey-green eyes and a rosy face, and used to do pen-and-ink drawings,—many were historical scenes. But I shudder at the recollection of the manner in which art was taught in those days at South Kensington; it was all so lifeless and mechanical, without any sense of beauty. The very meaning of art seemed then a *terra incognita*.

## THE FIRST TIME I CAME ACROSS THE LATE QUEEN

I WAS then in my teens. One afternoon I was copying a picture—"The Banished Lord," in the South Kensington Museum Art Gallery—and I was deeply engrossed in my work, for it was a difficult task. In my left hand I carried a palette and mahlstick ; in the other, paint brushes and a large paint rag. For the time being I had forgotten that I was in a public gallery, and was stepping forwards and backwards in order to judge better the effect of my copy in regard to the original, when suddenly I felt a hand on my shoulder, and a masculine voice said, "The Queen."

I turned round, and certainly would have trodden on Her Majesty's toes, if someone had not pulled me forward. My rag, with its splashes of yellow and vermilion paint, literally fell at her Majesty's feet. The royal lady, dressed so plainly in black, was smiling ; there was an amused twinkle in her eyes as she looked in my face.

"Oh, so sorry," I cried, sprawling on the floor and picking up the painting rag.

I heard a titter ; then to my utter relief the Queen and her suite walked away. There happened to be a hand-glass on my easel, which I used in order

to see the faults in my drawing. I peeped at myself; no wonder her Majesty was amused! There was a streak of cobalt blue on my nose, and a dab of scarlet on my chin. My hands were covered with paint.

So this little lady, dressed so plainly, was the Queen! I had imagined that she would have worn at all events a grand cloak trimmed with ermine, instead of that her dress was quite homely. I have never forgotten her bright, sunny, kindly smile.

The second time I saw the late Queen was close to the Norman Tower, Windsor Castle. I had been that day executing a pastel portrait of Lady Ponsonby's daughter, and was coming away from the Norman Tower. I had no gloves on, and was carrying a portfolio. But this time I behaved properly, for I literally made a kind of curtsy. The Queen smiled at me, and said something to her lady-in-waiting. Her Majesty knew that I was painting Miss Ponsonby's portrait.

As the Queen mounted the Tower (she was going to pay a visit to Lady Ponsonby) I regretted that I had not clutched at the opportunity which had been given me of painting the royal portrait. (Of this more anon.) The Queen's expression was so kindly—her smile positively illumined her countenance—I could not have felt nervous in her presence. The alarming people are the *entourage*; they are so conventional.

A lady artist told me that when she first went to the Castle to execute a Royal commission she was so frightened when she heard Her Majesty was coming that she backed into a window with such impetuosity that the curtains fell over her, completely conceal-

ing her from view. There she was on the floor, hidden under the draperies. The Queen, though she could not help laughing at this ludicrous incident, was so kind, that the minute she was extricated from her absurd position she felt quite at her ease.

## THACKERAY AGAIN

My sister fell dangerously ill, and Mr Thackeray, who was then living in Onslow Square, called nearly every day at our house in Thistle Grove, bringing delicacies of every sort to tempt the appetite of the young invalid.

His cook, who was a *cordon bleu*, had received orders to exert her culinary powers to their utmost, and she made the most exquisite dishes and jellies. I remember a note from Thackeray to my mother, with the words "A Last Appeal" written in capital letters, begging that the jellies should in the future be made with old sherry or the best Maderia. The doctor had ordered claret. One day Mr Thackeray walked up to our house carrying a rug of very bright, pleasant colours under his arm, which he himself laid down on the floor of my sister's room, thinking it would tend to raise her spirits. With children he was always delightful; with older or unsympathetic people he could be satirical, cold and cynical. He one day remarked to an acquaintance, in my mother's hearing, that he only liked "second-rate books, second-rate women, but first-rate wines." I often wondered if he was sincere when he uttered this remark.

Mr Thackeray had talent for drawing, but it was not sufficiently cultivated. He was never satisfied

with any of his achievements. My father called upon him one morning, and found him fretting over a drawing of his own.

“Look!” he exclaimed. “Now G.” (mentioning some clever draughtsman) “by a few touches, throwing some light or shadow here and there, would make this a picture. How it’s done I don’t know, but certainly I cannot accomplish it.”

Mr Thackeray suffered at times from mental depression, I heard my father say so more than once. He had a soft, low voice, and the most delightful smile. To ordinary acquaintances he was cold, dignified, impassible, but with a friend he was grave and sincere, and, my father often remarked, unrestrainedly expansive. He would then unveil his inmost thoughts, his secret and sacred feelings, but in his most attractive mood, he should be seen with little children.

My father first met him at Mr Eyre Evans Crowe’s, who was, like my father, a foreign correspondent. In the Forster Gallery at South Kensington, there is a pen-and-ink likeness of Mr Crowe, by Maclise. Mr Thackeray was a constant guest of the Crowes; and my father has told me (for I was not then born) that when the Crowes came to London to take part in the Editorial Department of the *Daily News* with Charles Dickens and John Forster, Mr Thackeray applied for Crowe’s place as correspondent of the *Morning Chronicle*, and, marvellous to relate, his application was declined.

“My number” (*Cornhill*) “is nearly due, and I cannot make it come,” he once said to my father, tapping his forehead. “Yes, I would like to rest my



head in some quiet corner. I had a nice scene this morning, but it is all gone, and I cannot call to mind a bit of it now."

As I study Laurence's portrait of Thackeray hanging in the study, I see in it a look which is almost scornful, in a measure. Perhaps he had now and then an expression of proud, unmitigated scorn, but it was scorn based on exquisite tenderness, on sympathy with some wrong which had provoked it.

I remember at a children's party he directed the attention of a young fellow towards a girl who, he feared, would not receive any attention because she was plain.

"Go and dance with her, my boy."

My father, who knew a little of him before the success of *Vanity Fair*, told me that when in Paris he often saw Thackeray writing in an old-fashioned *cabinet de lecture*. Then it dawned upon him that as literature was to be his profession he ought to settle in London. One day he remarked to my father,—

"I think there is room for a light-comedy man. I think I am a good second, good for some seven hundred copies!"

At this period he took a very modest estimate of himself; but of course such self-depreciation of his literary powers, as he so frequently expressed to my father, was before the publication of *Vanity Fair*. The enormous success of this novel at once ranked him with his favourite, Fielding.

Yet the same disposition to measure fairly his own strength was shown when speaking of his own illustrations. Though he had great artistic ambition he used

to confess that it was his want of knowledge of the technique of art which prevented his completing his own conception. One need not be reminded of the half-pathetic humour with which he has more than once referred to his having applied to be engaged to illustrate the serial of Charles Dickens, and of his being refused. My father has often remarked that Thackeray never spoke ill of literary men.

His hatred of snobs and humbug was proverbial, but he loved all that was simple and sincere.

Léon de Wailly considered *Henry Esmond* Thackeray's *chef d'œuvre*, and expressed a wish to translate it into French, to the great gratification of the author, but was prevented by declining health from accomplishing his object.

Thackeray did not write *au bout de la plume*, but on the contrary, with serious, thoughtful consideration. He was frequently ill, and he knew his state to be more serious than was suspected.

In my father's time of trouble Mr Thackeray was much more than a brother to him. I am sure that he fully appreciated my father's nature—a proud, oversensitive man, full of intellect, but shy and unobtrusive. My mother told me that when he heard for the first time of my parents' pecuniary loss he was most agitated, and turning to my mother he asked her what she was going to do.

"I mean to trust to the ravens," she answered.

An expression of pain flitted over the great man's face, but after a few seconds of silence he put his large hand over hers, and in a husky voice said, "And so you may; the ravens are kind friends."

At a large dinner it happened that my father's name was mentioned. Thackeray, who had been silent, brightened up and exclaimed, —

“When Corkran dies he will go straight to heaven, and all the angels will turn out and present arms to him.”

But William Makepeace Thackeray was beckoned away many years before my father was to join the great majority.

As he grew older his appearance became more imposing ; his magnificent head looked as if carved out of the finest granite—a worthy study for Michael Angelo.

His death made a blank which has never been filled up. When great men are called away the world at large feels their loss, and knows that their places are empty, but still all these people have the works of their genius on which to feed, and by which they may remember them ; but to those who have loved these great ones, and have met them in the easy kindly intercourse of everyday life, who have received their love and consolation in times of sorrow, and have shared their tears and laughter, no one can fill for them, the empty seats, and the heart goes back in longing to the days when they were among us.

## MRS BROOKFIELD

JANE OLIVIA BROOKFIELD was William Thackeray's greatest woman friend ; he was devoted to her till the hour of his death. It is said 'that she suggested Lady Castlewood.

I first saw Mrs Brookfield at a Christmas party. I was a child then ; her beauty and her charm impressed me so much, that when I saw Mr Thackeray talking to her I asked him who the pretty lady was with the large grey eyes. I recollect, his sudden, sunny smile. He took me by the hand and we walked towards the lady : she was Mrs Brookfield. Mr Thackeray exclaimed, "Here is a little admirer of yours." Her voice was so gentle and caressing that I was fascinated. She spoke to me in such a kindly way.

We went to live in Paris, and it was over twenty years before I again came across Mrs Brookfield, shortly after the death of her only daughter, Magdalen, who married Mr W. Ritchie, and had several children. Mr Ritchie is the elder brother of Mr Richmond Ritchie, who married Thackeray's eldest daughter, Ann, the authoress of *The House on the Cliff, Old Kensington*, etc.

When I met Mrs Brookfield again she was still beautiful, and her appearance most striking. She wore a kind of poke bonnet, with a long veil attached at the

back, and a circular cloak. She looked distinguished and fine, reminding me of a Greek figure I had seen executed by Phidias. She was then living in South Kensington with her son Charles, the clever actor. On the walls of the hall, dining-room and drawing-room were portraits of her late husband, the Reverend Mr Brookfield, of her son and daughter, of Thackeray, of Hallam, Carlyle, Adelaide Sartoris, etc., etc.

"A museum of the beloved dead," Mrs Brookfield exclaimed, as I recognised many of the faces. It was her cousin Hallam who inspired Tennyson's grand poem of "In Memoriam."

Mrs Brookfield had delightful anecdotes to relate about them all, especially about "dear Thackeray." She alluded to the publishing of his letters to herself, which appeared in *Scribner's Magazine*, and regretted that so many people found fault with her for making them public; but as the letters are charming, and as it is an age which indulges in the publishing of epistles (*vide* the Browning love letters, etc.) I do not see why Mrs Brookfield should be blamed. It is a pity that she did not write her own reminiscences, for she knew everybody worth knowing. Her descriptions of people were most graphic, and she had a keen sense of fun, but she put off writing till it was too late!

In her youth she herself confessed that she had been a coquette; she made many conquests. Besides beauty she had graceful, insinuating manners, and a little touch of *méchanceté* which gave piquancy to what she said.

On the day of Mr Thackeray's death, as Mrs Brookfield was driving in a hansom (she had not yet heard the sad news), she saw Mr Thackeray, or what she

supposed to be Mr Thackeray, standing by the horse's head in Piccadilly; he was looking and smiling radiantly at her. She was on the point of speaking to him, when to her astonishment he vanished. When she returned to her own house she found a letter from one of Thackeray's daughters breaking the news of his sudden death in his house in Palace Gardens.

In many ways Mrs Brookfield was a Trojan, full of courage and energy. I used to meet her (and she was then an old lady) tramping about in rain, hail and snow, or seated in omnibuses. I saw her about a year before her death, on a hot day in June, in the Strand, hurrying with a packet that her son Charles had forgotten, and which was of importance to him.

A few months before her death I called with her upon Anne Thackeray Ritchie, Thackeray's only surviving daughter, at her house in Wimbledon. There I saw Hester, the grand-daughter of Thackeray, a fine looking girl, but not in any way resembling her illustrious grandfather; she was quite the Ritchie type.

Mrs Brookfield died suddenly of failure of the heart in her little house in Walpole Street, Chelsea. I had seen her about a fortnight before. She was then well, but restless and depressed.



## PARIS AGAIN

(MADAME FREDERIKA O'CONNELL'S ATELIER)

MY father's money anxieties, and my sister's long and bad illness, were now events of the past. It was like walking out of a nightmare to find myself in dear, beautiful Paris again. Even the dear old sun shone more brightly than in London; the people looked happier, the streets cleaner. I could have embraced the *concierge* and his wife, as they sat in the pretty *loge* eating a delicious *omelette aux fines herbes*. No plain cook in London can make a true omelette. I have no hesitation in asserting that in the art of living the middle and lower classes in France are far ahead of the English; in their domestic life they are far more orderly. Many of the poor English really live like barbarians. They have no sort of knowledge of cooking, and their ideas of domestic comfort are primitive in the extreme.

When we were installed in our apartment in La Rue Blanche, I resolved to go on with my art studies. The atmosphere of Paris is far more inspiring than London, and I felt the difference at once. I was stimulated.

On making inquiries we heard that close to where we were living was a distinguished woman painter who took pupils in her studio.

## MADAME O'CONNELL AND HER ATELIER

MADAME FREDERIKA O'CONNELL resided in La Place Vintimille, a quiet secluded square close to La Rue d'Amsterdam, which is one of the noisiest streets in Paris. Her house was easily recognised, because of the large frontage of glass denoting the studio. A *concierge* in shirt sleeves was smoking a long clay pipe, while his wife was peeling vegetables inside her *loge*. When my mother inquired for Madame O'Connell the male Cerberus jerked his thumb, and laconically answered, "*Au Second.*" We went up a polished staircase and rang a bell. The door was opened by a woman in a white cap and blue apron, holding a saucepan. My mother handed her card; the *bonne* left us standing in a small kitchen to see if Madame would receive us. In a second or so after we heard a low, deep voice, exclaim, "*Faites entrer.*"

The *bonne* and her saucepan preceded us into a large studio, the walls of which were covered with pictures. In the corner stood huge palm trees, skins of beasts were strewn on the floor, there was an Erard piano, a skeleton, a lay figure, a big *bureau* with writing materials, and several yellow-backed French novels lying about. From behind a curtain appeared a short, very stout woman, almost as broad as she was long, dressed in a velvet bodice and a plain black

merino skirt, holding a brilliantly-prepared palette and a mahlstick in her hand. Round her large head was a broad velvet ribbon, to this was attached a black lace mantilla. Her face was large and sallow, the nose broad, with quivering nostrils, the lips thick ; but the plain countenance was redeemed by the wonderful dark eyes, full of fire and intelligence. A kind of magnetic power seemed to emanate from this stout, little, middle-aged woman—she projected an aura (as the Theosophists say) of energy and power.

“So you want to study art, *mon enfant*,” exclaimed Madame O’Connell, smiling kindly. “Youth is the proper time ; it is a very difficult *métier*, I can assure you ; but I see,” she continued, passing her hand lightly over my forehead, “that you have the organ of colour and imagination, but I doubt if you have perseverance—*enfin nous verrons !*”

We looked round the walls ; her masterpieces evidently were portraits. Amongst the remarkable men she had painted were Théophile Gautier, Alexandre Dumas and Le Père Enfantin, the founder of the St Simon Sect ; there was also a very striking picture of “Rachel Morte.” The great actress was depicted lying on her deathbed, with folded hands, her head wreathed with laurels. By the couch stood a classic lamp, the dying light of which symbolised the distinguished genius of the greatest classic tragedienne of modern times.

“That is Théophile Gautier’s portrait,” exclaimed Madame O’Connell. “It was a pleasure to paint such a delightful man—he was as fascinating as his books. You see he is in his dressing-gown. I insisted on

painting him in that costume, for I abhor the nineteenth-century male dress ; a shiny suit of black cloth is to me a nightmare. It is all very well for *épiciers* (grocers) and fools to be anxious about their clothes, but when a man is a genius he needn't care about his coat. Ah ! this is my own portrait," she continued, when she saw me looking at a splendid picture of a young woman in a white satin dress with pearl ornaments. "Yes, I was then twenty-two, slim and graceful, and strongly under the influence of that immortal painter, Velasquez. Ah ! is not that satin masterly ? Those cast shadows are sublime. *Mon Dieu !* it is first-rate work."

Madame O'Connell's feminine admiration of her own production amused me.

On an easel stood a fine picture. It fascinated me because of its dramatic qualities ; but though at that time no judge of art, I could even then see that there was none of the glow and tone of her earlier productions.

"You will excuse me if I attend to a little cooking," suddenly remarked Madame opening a buffet, and taking out a raw steak, she threw it on the gridiron. "It may seem barbarous to you, 'shocking,' *n'est pas*," smiling ; "that is the great English word, 'shocking !' You are a nation that pretends to be shocked, but this is my way of cooking *un biftek* (beefsteak). My servant does not understand, she does it so carelessly. Now, this picture," she continued, approaching the spot where we both stood, "is a scene from one of Balzac's novels. This woman is burning her father's will, thinking he is dead, but he

is not gone yet. Look at his hand thrust out from the bed curtains. I call it a *chef d'œuvre*! You do not see his face, it is not necessary, that hand tells everything; it expresses the protest of the expiring father against the daughter's crime. Is it not spectral? —eh, *donc*! how dramatic! And the woman and attitude, how fine they are. She shrinks as if she saw a ghost, her countenance expressing triumphant evil. When I want to be inspired I go to Balzac or to the Bible!”

“Now this,” turning to a big canvas on another easel, “is the temptation of Eve. There is *Le Diable*; how do you like him? Do you think he looks a demon? Is he hideous enough?”

It was not easy to admire the large, naked woman stretched out on the grass, with a grinning demon close to her.

“Ah! you are not enthusiastic about this my last work, but I admire it, and that is the great affair. That piece of flesh is equal to Rubens. Some people say that my Eve is too fat, but I like plump people; *voilà*, and as to *Le Diable*, I see him *comme ça tant pis*,” shrugging her shoulders. “It is not popular; I don't care to please the masses of fools, who know as little about art as that *bifteek*! *À propos*, if it is now cooked, and if you will excuse me, I shall eat it while it is hot.”

She ate it quickly; I sat opposite her, while my mother looked at the pictures.

“So you want to study painting, my child,” exclaimed again Madame O'Connell. “You will be both happy and miserable, but you will live, for you



will feel, but *il faut travailler, piocher*, in order to succeed. It is not enough to have the artistic temperament, you must go through the drudgery.

A few days after this visit I became an *élève* of Madame O'Connell's. She did not, as a rule, pay much attention to her pupils, but she seemed to take a kind of interest in me; for though I drew incorrectly, there was always a go and a life in my work which pleased her.

"It is always amusing your work," she would often exclaim, standing behind my back, with her fat, little hands on her hips. "You put a good deal of yourself into your drawing, a kind of picturesque *sans-souci*."

I used to hate drawing from the cast; I found it slow and dull, but sometimes Madame O'Connell allowed me to try a charcoal study from the model.

"Ah! *ce n'est pas mal*," that was her highest form of praise; when she said this I was happy. There were several other pupils; some were fairly advanced. It was a treat to see Madame O'Connell put in a head or a piece of still life; she laid on the colour thickly, the tones mosaic-like side by side; fine impasto and transparent shadows. The *ébauches* were always fine, but she often spoiled her work in the finish.

Amongst her pupils was a Mademoiselle Angèle, a great beauty. She reminded me of a picture I had seen of Marie Antoinette. She had a very queer mother, who always escorted her everywhere and sat on the sofa, either knitting or doing tapestry, generally abusing her daughter, telling us how vain, coquette and greedy she was; indeed that she had *les sept péchés cardinaux*."



Madame O'Connell gave weekly receptions at her *atelier*. She often had celebrities; such people as Daniel Sterne, La Comtesse Dash, Dumas *filz*, Feydeau, Le Père Enfantin, Champfleury, editors of papers, etc., etc., were to be found constantly discoursing in the dimly-lit studio. The only refreshments were weak tea, *sirop* and biscuits. Now and then we, the younger pupils, had a dance. How I used to enjoy those impromptu terpsichorean feats! Madame played dance music excellently, and, as the studio was large, we had plenty of space. I generally danced with a very tall young man—an army lieutenant—a pupil at St Cyr. He and I became great friends. He would not dance with anyone but me, not even with the belle of the *atelier*.

My high spirits were boundless. When not dancing we often had round games. Monsieur L. and I were nearly always partners.

## MY FIRST SERIOUS ADMIRER

THOUGH I did not care for him, he has a *niche* in my memory, simply because he was the first man who paid me serious attention.

I was a regular tomboy ; it never entered my wildest imagination that I could attract any lord of the creation. Though not pretty, in the ordinary sense of the word, I had *la beauté du diable* ! a fine complexion, sparkling grey eyes, white teeth, and an abundance of blue-black hair. I had buoyant spirits, was full of mischievous fun—a great contrast to the conventional French young girls I met at Madame O'Connell's. It was at her studio that young Lieutenant L. fell in love with me. I was unaware of this fact till Madame O'Connell informed me of it—much to my amusement.

The young man was then at St Cyr, and he came frequently to Madame O'Connell's. He was long and lanky, with big feet, and large ears that used to grow crimson at my approach. He always managed to sit by my side. I was constantly meeting him in the street when I was coming to or leaving the *atelier*, escorted by our servant. I wondered why he got so red, and why his legs seemed to totter. He danced remarkably well, and at the fancy ball (I was dressed like a *soubrette*, and he *en postillon*) we danced

all night as madly as two lunatics who had escaped from an asylum. He often sighed, and remarked that I was heartless and never serious. He constantly presented me with bouquets of flowers and pretty boxes of *bonbons*. I thought these attentions natural, as we were chums; but one afternoon, when all the pupils had left the *atelier*, Madame O'Connell called me into her sanctum (a kind of little *boudoir* where she wrote her letters), and I went with a certain amount of nervousness, for I thought she was going to scold me for having leaped over her stove, and fallen on the skeleton, which had rattled ominously. But as soon as I saw her big brown eyes twinkling with fun, I knew that she was not angry.

"Sit down, *diable!*" she exclaimed, looking at me critically from head to foot.

I recollect that day. I wore a long, blue cotton painting blouse; in my hand I held a mahlstick and a piece of charcoal. I then wore my hair short; it curled naturally. I took a peep at myself in the *cheval* glass, and remember thinking that I looked more like a mischievous schoolboy than a young girl.

"Well, guess," exclaimed Madame O'Connell, smiling, "why I have called you here?"

"Perhaps to show me some new purchase you have just made," I answered, gazing round the room.

"No, it is for something much more serious, *mon enfant*; sit here," indicating a seat.

"More serious," I retorted, plumping into the chair, feeling slightly alarmed, for I felt, as I shall probably feel on the Day of Judgment, full of sins of commission and omission.

"Well," clearing her throat, "you have made a serious conquest ; yes, you, a mischievous, disobedient creature, a kind of imp, Will-o'-the-Wisp, have an adorer."

"An adorer ! I don't know him then ; it must be a mistake, madame," I cried, incredulously.

"Don't pretend not to know, *diable*. Whom have you been talking to and dancing incessantly with for the last three months?"

"Oh," laughing, and then vexed with myself for blushing, "it is too ridiculous ; you mean Lieutenant L. He is not an adorer, we are simply good friends. He dances well, and gives me *bonbons*."

"Well," placing her hand on mine, "he really cares for you seriously, and has spoken to me. He is thinking of making you an offer of marriage."

"An offer of marriage !" I burst out laughing till the tears rolled down my cheeks.

"There is nothing to laugh at. He belongs to a good old French family ; his father is a General, his mother is related to a Marquise of Le Faubourg St Germain. I assure you that he is considered a very good *parti* ; besides, have you got a *dot* ? His family may not wish him to marry an Irish girl without a portion."

"That settles the question then, madame, for I shall have no *dot*, and must earn my living ; and please don't tell the young man that you have spoken to me about this, it is too absurd, and spoils all the fun. I shall have no more *bonbons*, flowers nor glorious wild dances ; all over, what a pity !"

Madame O'Connell shrugged her shoulders, some

one sent for her, so the interview for the present was at an end.

The General, a few days after this, called on my parents. I had a glimpse of him ; he had a red face, stiff white hair and a bluff manner. He came to ask what my future prospects were, as his son was seriously in love with me, and wanted to marry me.

The young lieutenant left for the north of Africa. Before starting he sent me a magnificent box of chocolates and a gorgeous bouquet of flowers, with a note, in which he wrote that he would return to Paris in a year, that then he hoped I would receive him, as he would have much to say to me, etc., etc.

I missed his attentions as a cavalier, but his going away relieved me. After what Madame O'Connell told me I no longer could be at my ease with him ; at the same time the knowledge that he admired me gave me a sense of importance. I became a little more feminine, had flashes of coquetry, and was certainly less of a tomboy.

I made great progress in my art. Madame O'Connell declared that I had a remarkable feeling for colour and tone.

Madame O'Connell was too energetic to concentrate her wonderful energy on her painting alone. She would spend hours working out difficult problems in mathematics, or reading her beloved Balzac. She was interested in the rights of humanity, the liberty of women. She was a curious mixture of lavishness and sordidness. One of her greatest delights was buying second-hand clothes and odd pieces of old furniture, which she hoarded up. Once a week she

made a pilgrimage to Le Marché du Temple, the emporium for second-hand trade, especially wearing apparel, such as laces, furs, jewellery, dresses, boots and even hair and teeth. The Temple was erected by the Knights Templars in the thirteenth century, and is now a regular market; the upstairs halls are devoted to the second-hand trade. It was there that the brilliant, talented Madame O'Connell delighted to spend hours, bargaining, buying heaps of things she would never require, merely for the pleasure of getting clothes at reduced prices, useless hoards which overflowed her big studio. But how pleased she was when she had acquired a piece of lace, a dress, feathers, etc., for a quarter of the price asked. She would exhibit her trophies to her friends and pupils with as much exultation as a General would his colours from a battlefield. The insolent speeches and the insulting epithets lavished upon her by the Marchandes du Temple for offering the third of what they asked for their wares were repeated to her friends with expressions of triumph. If she managed to make her bargains successfully, what matter if the Marchandes abused her? They were defeated.

I once asked Madame O'Connell where her husband was.

She answered with a characteristic shrug, "The apartment is too small, so I have packed him off."

She was deeply attached to a man, low in origin, very poor, but who had a genius for mathematics. Her devotion to this queer individual was touching and unswerving. She cared not what Mrs Grundy said about this *liaison*.



She gave a fancy ball in her big studio. It was great fun ; there was a picnic supper, the ladies providing the dishes, the men the wines. It was a highly festive scene. Madame looked remarkably striking as the queen of the night, in grey-blue net spangled with stars, a crescent silvery moon and an owl on her head. It was a motley, incongruous assemblage—kings, peasants, monks, devils, naïads, nymphs, cats, bears, and gods.

I was a *vivandière des Zouaves*, and wore a crimson vest embroidered with gold braid, red knickerbockers, a jaunty cap perched on my head, and a little barrel of cognac strapped across my shoulder. My admirer, Lieutenant L., was *en postillon*. We enjoyed ourselves thoroughly, and at dawn we were still dancing madly.

This sort of excitement was not conducive to the repose necessary to the artist for the creation of fine work. Madame O'Connell's pictures suffered, and strange to say she did not realise the cause of her failure. Her picture of Eve and the Devil was refused by the *Salon*, and her indignation against the jury was great.

Though I did not work hard I made great progress in drawing, and some of my charcoal studies of heads from the life were praised by Madame O'Connell. She used to say of me, "*Le diable* has a lot in her, even a *soupçon* of genius, but she lacks concentration and perseverance."

I thoroughly enjoyed my life at the studio, where I met many interesting people, and heard curious discussions on men, women, and things. Madame O'Connell fascinated me ; she had such vitality and genius.

## “DUBLIN AND MY IRISH RELATIVES”

I WAS now in my eighteenth year, and I received a pressing invitation from my mother's eldest sister to spend some time in Dublin in order to make the acquaintance of some of my Irish relatives.

I accepted, and found an escort—a young French woman, who was going to be a governess in an Irish nobleman's family.

Life was *couleur de rose* just then—all anticipation ; everything was delightful ; there were no shadows, all was sunshine.

At the Dublin station I was met by a herculean young man, who came forward and mentioned his name. He was my cousin ; rather handsome and genial. He remarked that though I was Frenchy in dress, he was glad to see that I had Irish eyes !

I found myself seated in an Irish car, and had difficulty in keeping seated ; the Jehu, a wild-looking fellow, with bright red hair and a brogue, drove us at a furious pace. I screamed several times, which evidently amused the Paddy coachman.

“Bedad, honey ! It is surely your forst dhrive. Have you not got Oirish blood in you ? ”

I answered that I had Irish blood in me, but that it was my first glimpse of Ireland.

“Ah, may God bless you on this your arrival in the ould country.”

When we reached my aunt's house a couple of young men, who declared they were my cousins, to my annoyance embraced me. They had about them a strong perfume of tobacco. Then appeared a tall, handsome, elderly lady with a high-bred appearance who said she was my aunt.

I never saw anyone so unlike a sister as this aunt was to my mother ; she was a great deal older, being the eldest of a large family and my mother the youngest.

Then I was introduced to her daughter who was engaged to be married. She was the prettiest girl I had ever seen. By her side hovered a man who attracted me strangely, for not only had he an intelligent face, but he had a kind of magnetism about him. Though small and plain his eyes were fine, and he threw heaps of expression into them when he addressed my cousin. I was surprised to hear that he was not her *fiancé*, for they seemed mutually attached, and certainly they were always together.

But Irish ways are unlike French ways where young girls are concerned. In France well brought-up unmarried girls never used to flirt, or have any kind of intimacy with men.

In Dublin everybody flirted ; the words “in love” were constantly bandied about, as if to be in love was the normal condition of men and women.

My aunt struck me as being extraordinarily high-spirited for her age. She must have been, in her youth, a beauty, and she had the reputation of being the greatest

coquette of her time ; she was fond of relating her many conquests, and the offers of marriage she had received. She related with zest a bet she had won by declaring that she would make a very fat, elderly Quaker go on his knees to her on the beach and entreat her to become his wife. Nobody believed that she would succeed. Two men friends of hers took a lodging which overlooked the solitary beach. The fat Quaker appeared, and in less than an hour was seen kneeling at my aunt's feet, so she won the bet.

My aunt and cousins were full of animal spirits. A young curate paid me a little attention, and escorted me in some of my walks—there were no end of remarks and speculations. About this he disappeared. My aunt declared that I had refused his offer of marriage ; probably he had committed suicide. One day she came into my room, her face, which was mobile and easily assumed any expression she wished, looked anxious and sad. Pointing to a newspaper, she asked me to read the following paragraph :—

“ SAD CASE OF DISAPPOINTED LOVE.—The body of the Reverend J. S. was found in the Liffey. It is supposed that the cause of the suicide is unrequited love. The object of his unfortunate affair is a young and charming girl, a native of France.”

“ There, what do you say to that ? ” exclaimed my aunt.

I had noticed that this paragraph had been pasted on to the paper, as one side did not stick down.

“ It is a hoax,” I retorted.

That night a figure in white arrayed in the orthodox ghostly raiment (a sheet) prowled about the dark passages of the stairs, evidently intended to be the ghost of the unhappy young curate.

My sharp eyes recognised the thick muddy boots of my eldest cousin. Unfortunately for him he sneezed loudly. I laughed, remarking that ghosts as a rule did not sneeze.

But all these foolish tricks and pranks made me distrust my aunt and cousins. I had never come across such queer people. Immediately after my cousin's marriage I left them, and accepted an invitation to stay with an elderly cousin of my mother's in the environs of Dublin—a motherly, married woman.

My cousin's house was surrounded by a large garden, filled with flowers. In that Garden of Eden I really fell in love. At this house I again met the little dark-eyed man (he is now a celebrity, but I do not mention his name) with the peculiar magnetic power which had impressed me the moment I saw him. This makes me believe that sudden attraction between the opposite sexes is a form of hypnotism, the strong will acting on the feeble.

In my case I knew that it would be no use resisting the influence, and indeed I did not try. I had been suddenly touched by a magic wand, and felt inclined to cry like Mother Hubbard, "Surely 'tis not I!" The influence was pleasant, like champagne; brightening, and making life more joyful. He taught me botany; there was a delightful bower, just room for two on the bench; the trellis-work was covered with honeysuckle.

My cousin and her husband were old friends of Mr



A. (I cannot of course give his right name, now so well-known). They encouraged his attentions, for even then, at the age of three or four-and-thirty, he was making a great reputation. He was reported to be so busy that he scarcely ever had time to pay visits, and now he was continually at my cousin's house. He rode a white horse. I can see him now galloping towards my bower, a happy smile illuminating his plain intelligent face when he caught sight of me. Not only did he call daily, but I generally found a letter from him every morning. It was a romantic episode ; whether I was to be married or not did not then trouble me.

Having been brought up in France, where young girls are so strictly chaperoned, I rather wondered at the great liberty I had. My cousins took it for granted that I was engaged to be married to him.

One beautiful evening (my cousins had taken lodgings near Bray) he and I wandered on the beach, and the moonlight, the swish of the waves, harmonised with our feelings. He suddenly embraced me, and asked me to be his little wife. Those kisses acted on my careless and happy-go-lucky temperament, and transformed me suddenly from a tomboy into a woman. He poured out wild words of passion, but he bound me to secrecy, and begged that our engagement for the present should be kept a secret.

I did not ask why—it did not matter ; he loved me, that was everything. For the first time the beauty of nature appealed strongly to me ; never had the stars been so bright, the air so exquisitely fragrant, life so delightful.

I had to confide my secret, to my cousin, whose



guest I was. She promised not to divulge the engagement, except to my parents ; I was in her charge, and under age. Though very happy I was not sentimental or mawkish ; indeed, the demon of mischief was often kicking inside me, prompting me to tease and torment my poor lover. I recollect once finding him asleep in the bower where he was waiting for me, and actually cutting off one side of his moustache, which made him look so ridiculous that he had to go into the country till it grew again, and yet I really cared for him.

I must mention a weird incident that occurred shortly after our private engagement, which perhaps was an ill omen.

I was spending a couple of days with friends of my parents. Mr J. was then Inspector of Churchyards. His house stood in Mount Jerome Cemetery. One evening returning from a party with my *fiancé*, the brougham stopped at the gate of the cemetery ; he left me to return alone to the house. I walked on, feeling terribly nervous, through an avenue of tombstones, which, in the darkness, looked awfully ghostly. I hurried on with fear and trembling ; every sound alarmed me, even the rustling of leaves and the darting of a rat or mouse terrified me. My net skirt trailed on the ground and caught in some bush. I slipped. Horror of horrors ! I felt myself going down, down into a deep hole. I came down with a thud—I had fallen into an open grave ! I yelled out, “ Help, help ! I am here in a grave ! ”

It seemed a century before any one appeared. It was not possible for me to get out without help ; if not soon rescued I felt I should go mad. At last I

saw the light of a lantern, like a Will-o'-the-Wisp darting in and out of the tombstones. I gave another piercing shriek. The light approached, so I called out, “I have fallen into this open grave. Come on, quick, it is too horrible.”

“Bedad, I thought it was a ghost, but it is not the Resurrection yet!” Then a couple of strong arms hauled me out of the grave. My rescuer was a sort of grave-digger man. I was trembling from head to foot, my teeth chattering. I was covered with earth, and quite a piteous object.

That night I had a hideous nightmare. I was being buried alive and could not scream. The next morning, when I opened my eyes, the sun was streaming into my room—looking out I saw a funeral procession making its way to the grave I had fallen into.

This incident made a deep impression on me, and I felt that it was perhaps an omen of ill-luck. Every morning I received letters from my *fiancé* (I have them still, though they are yellow with age and faded).

I went to spend a few days with the brother of the cousin I was then staying with near Dublin. He was a clergyman, a married man, and had pupils. Here a terrible incident occurred, and my visit came to a sudden termination. My cousin complained of feeling poorly. He had been overworked, but as the holidays were approaching he did not complain much, thinking that the rest would set him up.

On the second evening after my arrival, just before supper, I was with him in the drawing-room, looking out into their gardens. He had asked me a riddle, and I was pondering over the answer, when I suddenly

heard him groan, and then he fell on the floor. I thought he had fainted, his face was so white. I rushed out of the room, rang the bell, and a servant man came in. I heard him exclaim, "My God, he is dead !"

The doctor arrived. My cousin had died of sudden heart failure. This gave me a great shock. His wife was away, and, though it was evening, I determined to walk back to Dublin and break the sad news to his sister. It was moonlight ; I shall never forget that walk. I was so excited I ran part of the way, and, as I wore evening shoes, the soles broke. On I trudged, and when I was within a mile of the house I met my *fiancé*.

Then all my nervous terror vanished. He poured forth words of love ; it was a *Romeo and Juliet* scene. The big yellow moon, the regulation moon of lovers, shone upon us.

But the open grave and my cousin's sudden death had unnerved me ; I felt that something unpleasant was likely to happen.

A few days after my cousin's death I received an invitation from one of my mother's old friends, "Speranza," Lady Wilde. I had met her husband, Sir William, at a mutual acquaintance's, and to my horror he embraced me. (The Irish are evidently fond of kissing.) He declared that, being an old friend of my family, he had a right to kiss me. He was one of the ugliest men I had ever seen, exactly like a gorilla, and not a clean one into the bargain.

I went to my room and washed my face. He was extremely clever and entertaining, but untidy and un-

shaven. In his youth he had been much in love with Helen Faucit. He used to go every night to see her acting ; but one evening a man in the gallery called out, “Wash your face, Willie, and then perhaps she will have you.” This sally produced much laughter, but though William Wilde washed his face the charming actress did not marry him.

At that period of my life I had hardly any pocket-money. One Sunday I knew that there was going to be a collection towards the purchasing of a new organ for the church (the clergy are always begging for money from their congregations), and most reluctantly I put aside a sixpenny-piece for the organ. Why should a young girl with hardly any filthy lucre be expected to give anything? The plate was handed into the pew where I was sitting, wedged in on one side by a lady who looked as if she was the embodiment of all the conventionalities of this world. I remember she had protruding white teeth, and supercilious pale blue eyes, and at the other side sat my kindly but worldly cousin. I opened my purse, and, to my utter horror and disgust, found that instead of a sixpence I had deposited in the plate by mistake a little gold piece—a half-sovereign—almost my only pocket money for the next week. There it lay, new and gleaming, so beautiful on the brown coppers. No, it was impossible, I could not let so big a sum slip out of my possession.

Without reflecting I cried out, “Oh, it is a mistake, I only intended giving a sixpence,” clutched hold of the plate, and fished out triumphantly my half-sovereign. The gentleman collecting was evidently so bewildered

and fluttered that between us the plate was dropped, and the money rolled on the floor, causing such a noise that everybody looked towards the pew, and there was great tittering.

“How could you do anything so shocking?” exclaimed my aunt *sotto voce*.

The lady with the teeth shuddered, muttering something about charity under her breath.

But I had my half-sovereign back. From that day I have always remembered this incident, and when I go to church I never leave any gold in my purse.

## LADY WILDE

### “ SPERANZA ”

EVEN before my birth my mother and “Speranza” had had a long correspondence. She then wrote revolutionary poems in the *Nation* newspaper. She was one of a fiery band, amongst whom there were Gavan Duffy, Smith O’Brien, Dillon, Meagher, John Mitchell, Fergusson, etc., etc. A wild delirium of patriotic excitement raged through Ireland. Young orators and poets used their genius to show up the wrongs, hopes and heroic memories of their country. I had often heard my family speak of “Speranza” as an eccentric woman of genius; extravagant, and even foolish, in language; holding absurd views about life.

I called at Merrion Square late in the afternoon, for Lady Wilde never received anyone till five p.m.; and as she hated what she called the “brutality of strong lights,” the shutters were closed and the lamps had pink shades though it was full daylight.

A very tall woman—she looked over six feet high—she wore that day a long crimson silk gown which swept the floor. Her skirt was voluminous; underneath there must have been two crinolines, for when she walked there was a peculiar swaying, swelling move-



ment like that of a vessel at sea, the sails filled with wind. Over the crimson were flounces of Limerick lace, and round what once had been a waist an Oriental scarf, embroidered with gold, was twisted. Her long, massive, handsome face was plastered with white powder; over her blue-black glossy hair was a gilt crown of laurels. Her throat was bare, so were her arms, but they were covered with quaint jewellery. On her broad chest were fastened a series of large miniature brooches, evidently family portraits, which came down almost as low as the gastronomical region; this gave her the appearance of a walking family mausoleum. She wore white kid gloves, held a scent bottle, a lace handkerchief and a fan. Lady Wilde reminded me of a tragedy queen at a suburban theatre.

When I appeared, feeling rather shy and awed, she exclaimed, stretching out a hand almost as large as a shoulder of mutton, "Ah, you are like your intellectual father, but you have not got his noble brow! But I see by the form of your eyelids, and the shape of your forehead, that you have decided artistic qualities. I hear that you are going to be a painter, perhaps a second Angelica Kauffman."

"I hope not, for I do not care for her pictures. I would rather be myself," I answered brusquely.

"So you are ambitious. I like ambition. In a previous existence I was an eagle. I wonder what you were?" continued "Speranza," staring at me, "perhaps a Madame Roland, or a Sappho. As a rule I cannot stand girls or women; they are so flimsy, frivolous, feeble in purpose—they so seldom achieve anything. But you look as if you would, perhaps, prove an

exception. But I hear that you have a lover, and love puts an end to ambition. But don't bind yourself till you have seen more of men. I shall invite a few men of divine instincts and aspirations to meet the daughter of my intellectual friend."

I have never before or since met anyone like Lady Wilde; she was such a curious mixture of nonsense, with a sprinkling of genius.

Though she dressed so absurdly she was always thinking of dress, and found fault with me for wearing simple garments. As for a black dress, she remarked that it should be sedulously avoided, especially so in the case of young girls. "Nothing," she declared, "can be more dreary than rows of opaque black bundles along the walls of a drawing-room.

"Englishwomen have a fatal predisposition towards black, and when they reach middle life generally retire into a black alpaca for the remainder of their days. This voluntary adoption of the symbol of doom is depressing. Dress ought to express a moral idea; it symbolises the intellect and disposition of a nature."

"I should like to reform women's garments" (Lady Wilde writes thus in her journal). "As for the literary dress, it should be free, untrammelled and unswathed, as simple and as easily adjusted as Greek drapery, and fastened only with a girdle or brooch; no stiff corselet should depress the full impulses of a passionate heart; there should be no *false* coils or frizzy fringe on the brow to heat the temples and mar the cool logic of thought; and the fewer frills, cuffs, cascades of lace, the better, for in moments of divine frenzy or feverish excitement the authoress is

prone to overturn her ink-bottle. No inspiration could have come to Pythia had she worn a corset or hoop."

Lady Wilde was always eloquent; she spoke so well on dress that I wondered how she could array herself in such absurd garments.

"A woman should study her own personality, and consider well what she means to be and can be: either a superb Juno, a seductive Aphrodite, or a Hebe blooming and coquette, or a Pallas Athene; and when the style is discovered that best suits her—it may be for homage or for love—let her keep to it. As the symbol of her higher self, unchanged by frivolous mutilations of fashion, dress then attains a moral significance, and becomes the exoteric expression of the spiritual nature."

What did her strange dress express, I wonder?

My *fiancé* called nearly every day to see me when I was staying at Merrion Square. Lady Wilde had an interview with him. She recommended an elopement as being more romantic, and she said she would help us in every way. I recollect her saying to me shortly before I left Dublin (she had had a long talk with my *fiancé*), "that my lover, though well-informed, was not at all brilliant; that, however, men do not require information but inspiration, and often find its fullest affluence in the warm glow of a woman's appreciation and her beautiful sympathy."

She used to say she hoped that when she died her body would be thrown in the sea, or buried near a rock on some wild coast. She loathed the idea of being buried in a London cemetery, perhaps near some common tradesman. Lady Wilde was an

accomplished linguist ; she spoke seven languages. Her translation of *Sidonia the Sorceress*, by Meinhold, excited much attention. Dante Rossetti talked a great deal about it to Ruskin. Swinburne also praised the splendid translation by Lady Wilde, so there was a great run on *Sidonia the Sorceress*. A well-printed edition was published by Morris.

If her talk was often foolish and even reprehensible, her own life was honourable and courageous, and never mean. Though she liked interchange of thought she never gossiped or listened to scandal. She was fond of solitude ; she realised that joy comes not from outer things, but from the depths of the inner being. Her talk was like fireworks—brilliant, whimsical and flashy. She was most inconsistent, and in many ways very foolish. But in great adversity she was brave, indeed heroic, and went through terrible ordeals ; and though she felt the sharp pinch of poverty she was always ready to help those who were worse off than herself.

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My father for some reason did not entirely approve of my engagement, and I began to think it odd that my *fiancé* wished it to be kept so long secret. My relations and friends were often questioned about the date of my future marriage. I was so worried that when I received a pressing letter from my mother's old friend, Professor Pillans (who was then tottering on the brink of another world), to pay him a visit at his house in Edinburgh, I wrote by return of post to accept, and a few days later sailed from Dublin, which I have never since then revisited.

## EDINBURGH : PROFESSOR PILLANS AND PROFESSOR BLACKIE

I FELT when leaving Dublin that I was entering upon a new era in my life, and had a presentiment that not only I should not marry my *fiancé*, but that I would probably never again see dear, dirty Dublin.

I reached Glasgow in drizzling rain on a Saturday afternoon. Though I only spent a few hours in the town I was home-sick. Every second person I saw was more or less drunk, and everything was gloomy and ugly. But when I reached Edinburgh the town was bathed in a glorious purple and pink sunset, which gave it a poetical appearance. Indeed, Edinburgh looked like a fairy city.

I reached Professor Pillans's house literally in a carnival of colour. I was keenly sensitive to beauty, and that drive through Princes Street in quivering light filled me with joy.

It was a pleasure to see again my mother's devoted friend and adopted father, Professor Pillans. Though extremely aged his eyes were still very blue, his cheeks like rosy apples, and his snowy white hair gave him a picturesque appearance. When sitting in his big armchair in the cosy study lined with book cases, filled with hundreds and hundreds of hand-



somely bound books, surmounted by busts of great men from Homer to Burns, he made a living picture. I was still a girl in my teens, and though at times I felt keenly the great change from my recent Irish visit, yet I enjoyed Professor Pillans's conversation, also hearing him read aloud long passages from Homer and Virgil, or the *Odes* of Horace. Often he would recite poems from Burns, which in his musical Scotch accent pleased me very much. After I had been a couple of days with the dear old Professor, I received a letter from my cousin which gave me quite a shock. She informed me that after making searching inquiries she had found out that my *fiancé* was still engaged to a young lady, that no doubt he cared more for me, but that certainly she had a previous claim on him.

By the same post I received a letter from him more lover-like than ever, begging of me not to believe anything that was said against him, and that if I was willing we should be married in a couple of months.

It struck me then as most reprehensible (and it so struck many of my friends, too), that while in Dublin, under the protection of an elderly cousin, I, an inexperienced young girl, should have been so much thrown into his society without any sort of chaperonage, only a happy-go-lucky, taking-for-granted that it would end in a satisfactory manner. When I wrote to ask him if it was true that he was already engaged to be married, in his reply he admitted that there had been something of the kind, but that having grown to care for me far more he had hoped that he could have broken it off completely. He urged me to keep quiet,



and declared that he hoped we should be married shortly.

I was more excited than unhappy. I talked about the affair to my friends; this was a kind of relief. Everybody abused him, and said he was anything but honourable or chivalrous.

He came to Edinburgh, and paid me a visit at Professor Pillans', and there it was settled that I should have nothing more to do with him. I was not unhappy; I thoroughly blamed his behaviour. What I supposed had been love turned to a sort of cynical contempt, his conduct had been so weak and vacillating.

Professor Pillans was indignant. He was a chivalrous, kind old gentleman, and did everything in his power to keep my mind occupied. I was still full of animal spirits, strong and healthy, so I soon got over the disappointment, though it had the effect of making me of a less trustful disposition.

At one of Professor Pillans's breakfast parties I met Professor Blackie. He was elderly, wore his white hair long, falling on his shoulders; his features were handsome. He seemed unable to keep still, always gesticulating, talking or singing. He was a restless spirit, and so Scotch that when he talked to me I could scarcely understand what he was saying. He generally wore a plaid-shawl round his shoulders, and a soft, black, felt hat. He often struck attitudes. He once shouted at me the following lines :—

“ Would'st thou be a happy liver  
Let the past be past for ever !  
Fret not, when prigs and pedants bore you,  
Enjoy the good that's set before you.”

## Professors Pillans and Blackie 145

“I love Goethe,” Professor Blackie used to say, “because his writings have upon me the same exhilarating effect as champagne. I have always loved him ; he has such freshness of spirit, such capacity for enjoyment ; there is no fretting about the past, no anxiety about the future.”

One afternoon I met Professor Blackie at the house of a lady whose drawing-room was filled with fragile ornaments. The Professor kept moving his stick about ; if he flung it, as he often did when excited, it would mean destruction to everything. I noticed that our hostess looked anxiously towards her china and Venetian glass.

He was like an elderly schoolboy ; his temperament was mercurial ; he seemed to enjoy life thoroughly. I heard him say that the qualities he admired most were courage, cheerfulness and charity.

He recited to me the whole of St Paul’s glorious description of Charity. He never hesitated for a word ; his memory was extraordinary. He and Professor Pillans exercised a really soothing influence over me ; they braced me up. I resolved to occupy my mind, to work hard ; indeed, I now longed to earn money. Though I was only in my teens, I determined to try and keep myself, and thus lessen my father’s anxieties, for his literary occupation was more or less precarious.

## A RIDE IN A HEARSE

Just before leaving Edinburgh I had rather a weird experience. I had gone out for a long prowling by myself one afternoon, and completely lost my way. The snow began to fall; fortunately, I had a waterproof and carried an umbrella. The snow thickened. I was in totally unknown regions; the sense of desolation and the silence were alarming. Not a soul was to be seen anywhere. I was alone in a desert of snow.

I was getting terrified. How should I get back to Professor Pillans's house? In the distance I spied something very black making its way through the storm. I shrieked and made frantic signs with umbrella and handkerchief. The black thing moved in my direction. At last I discovered that it was an empty hearse—some poor creature's funeral car evidently returning from the churchyard. The driver was the sole living being, with the exception of the lean horse. He stopped; he was grinning; his face was red and good-natured. I told him that I was alone, and had lost my way.

"Puir lassie!" he exclaimed. "Jump inside and I will drive you into the town; you are a good way out of your way, lassie."

For an instant I recoiled with a feeling of horror. Every drop of blood in my body was brought to a stop

when I got inside the open hearse! But there was no other alternative. It was my only chance of getting back to Inverleith Row, where Professor Pillans lived.

The driver opened a bag, and presented me with a long black cloak and a weeper.

"That will keep you warm, lassie," he exclaimed, touching the old horse with his whip. I shrank into a corner. It was a dreadful sensation; I seemed to see the outline of a corpse lying by my side in the hearse. But the lights of Edinburgh town, looming through the darkness, cheered me. The coachman stopped at the bottom of Inverleith Row. I could not let him drive to the door, for that might bring ill-luck to the dear old Professor. I had some difficulty in making the kindly driver accept a couple of shillings, but I asked him to drink my health in a glass of hot whisky, and he consented.

One special evening at Professor Pillans's house stands out with metallic sharpness from the surrounding fog or gloom of time.

I was sitting in his delightful library, embroidering a slipper for the one-legged portion of humanity, never having had the patience to work the same pattern twice over. The Professor was reading aloud passages from some of his favourite novels of Walter Scott. The lamp cast a silvery light on his snowy hair and ruddy cheeks. The oak bookcase and deep maroon curtains made a fine background, throwing out in strong relief the picturesque old face and head. It was a subject for Rembrandt. He alone could have rendered the splendid light and shade, the chiaroscuro, the thin, aged hands holding the book. It was an embodiment

of the pathos and the dignity of old age. I was not listening to his reading of Walter Scott, but thinking of the fine pictorial subject in front of me, when suddenly there was a tempestuous aggressive sneeze—a sneeze that seemed to shake the library. “God bless you!” I exclaimed; but to my dismay, indeed horror, I perceived, lying on the fold of my skirt, a double row of false teeth—the Professor’s teeth! They seemed to be grinning defiantly at me. I glanced shyly towards their owner. A change had come over his nice old countenance; the cheeks had collapsed, the lips tightened; he looked over a hundred years of age. What was I to do? It was an awkward situation. I could not possibly hand back the *râtelier* to my courteous, genial host; it certainly would have humiliated him.

I rose from my chair, the teeth slipped on the carpet.

“I have forgotten my handkerchief!” I exclaimed. “Please excuse me; I shall go to my room and get it.”

It was an inspiration. I flew out of the library and remained away nearly half an hour, sincerely hoping that the old gentleman would never know that I had perceived the flight of his unlucky grinders.

When I returned to the library the Professor was sleeping peacefully; his mouth was open, but the teeth had been replaced. That was a relief! He woke up with a start. “Ah!” he exclaimed. “Forgive my having taken forty winks in your absence. It is my habit to sleep when I get a chance.”

He seemed quite at his ease. I verily hope and

believe that he was under the impression I had not perceived the flight of the false teeth.

He resumed his reading of Walter Scott and I worked at the slipper, but from that moment I was in a state of constant alarm for fear there might be a recurrence of the teeth escapade!

It was with great regret that I left the hospitable, learned Professor. He was a sincere friend of my mother's, and a really delightful old man. I never saw him again, for he died within that year.



## GENERAL CARMICHAEL

(THE ORIGINAL OF COLONEL NEWCOME)

AFTER leaving Edinburgh I went on to London to spend a little time with friends of my parents, and relatives of William Thackeray, General and Mrs Carmichael, who were then residing in Brompton.

Dear old General ! with the tenderest heart, though often using the roughest words, swearing and smiling, with kindly blue eyes and a ferocious moustache, most generous, and yet in certain ways almost penurious. My father often said that William Thackeray told him that General Carmichael had suggested "Colonel Newcome."

I recollect distinctly on the day of my arrival at Hyndford House seeing a poor woman almost in rags standing in the door-way. She had a baby in her arms ; both were shivering. The General was putting over her shoulders what seemed to me to be a plush table-cover with roses embroidered on it. When he caught sight of me the old warrior blushed ; he gave her a parcel, and put in her hand a shilling. The poor woman then disappeared, and the General whispered, "Don't betray me to my wife or I shall get such a scolding, and will never hear the end of it ; but the fact is, the woman was perishing with cold. I

could not find a shawl or cloak anywhere, so I removed the cloth from my study table. I shall buy another one presently ; but, damn it all, a woman's life is more important than a table-cloth ! But not a word of this, or I shall catch it from the wife."

I promised secrecy.

At dinner that evening the General asked me if I would drink his raspberry wine.

"I make it myself," he exclaimed with a tone of exultation in his voice. "It is so wholesome and cheap ; damn it, what more can any one want in this world ? "

I did drink it without making a grimace ; it was a most abominable concoction ; it had a flavour of vinegar, decayed fruit, and pepper, etc. In order to please the dear old warrior I asked for a second help of "the General's wine," as it was called in the household.

How his blue eyes twinkled with pleasure and pride, and glaring at his wife and two children exclaimed, "You see she likes it."

So every evening I drank this horrible mixture in a Spartan spirit without betraying any disgust.

Mrs Carmichael was a great deal younger than the General. She really enjoyed bad health, generally shutting herself up in a dark bedroom till late in the afternoon writing letters, etc., and taking notes of her symptoms for the doctor. She was short and rather stout, with a good complexion, large eyes, and fine hair, which she wore in ringlets. When she appeared very late in the afternoon she would lie down on the sofa attired in a loose silk jacket. Her voice was rather affected, and every word was enunciated with peculiar

clearness. The old General now and then told on her nerves, for he slammed the doors, and stepped heavily. He was like a bull in a china shop. He prowled all over the house in order to see if the servants performed their work ; he had a horror of waste.

I recollect one morning Mrs Carmichael's maid handed me a pencil note from her mistress requesting me to come to her bedroom. Mrs Carmichael was in bed. Her dark head reposed on a white pillow, her eyes shut, she was inhaling a vinaigrette bottle. On her coverlid were dry bones, bits of cheese, cold potatoes, heaps of stale bread ; in fact, the coverlid was so crowded with all kinds of refuse that it was not distinguishable. It was such a ludicrous sight that I could not help laughing.

"I have called you," said a mournful voice from under the bed-clothes, "not to laugh, but to witness this abomination. The General, whose mind is not occupied, has been prowling in the lower regions ; he is furious because he has found all these remains in the kitchen, as if it was my fault that servants are wasteful. It is positively cruel, in my delicate state of health—enough to give me typhoid to have those smelly odds and ends on my bed—but before having them thrown out in the dust-bin I wished you to witness that the holy state of matrimony is not always a bed of roses ! It will necessitate an entire set of new bedding." Then turning to the maid, "Clear away all this horrible *débris*, pour a whole bottle of *eau de Cologne* on me. The General has many virtues, but he does not comprehend the sensitive, frail nature of the highly-wrought nervous woman. His nature is robust,

of a coarser fibre," she sighed. I left the room much amused.

The General was not wealthy ; his generosity to the poor and suffering was unbounded, so that in order to be able to help those who really required it, he had fits of domestic economy which no doubt were trying. He wished everybody to go to bed early, and even if there were visitors, sometimes turned off the gas if they remained too late.

But notwithstanding these eccentricities he was a true gentleman, in the highest sense of the word. To women he was invariably chivalrous ; he never uttered a coarse word, though he sometimes swore. He was a living Thackeray character.

I recollect once meeting the famous Dr Atkinson, the great friend of Harriet Martineau. There was a talk about mesmerism one afternoon. There happened to be present an elderly spinster from Bath whom I disliked. I remarked that I thought that I had magnetic power.

"Oh, indeed!" exclaimed the Bath lady, "if you succeed in sending me into a mesmeric slumber I shall for ever believe in it. How can a young girl talk such rubbish!" She gave a snort which exasperated me, and put me on my mettle.

"I will try," I exclaimed, "and believe I shall succeed."

She settled herself in an armchair, and to my utter astonishment, after a few passes, she became rigid ; her jaw fell, her eyes closed, she looked like a person in a trance.

We were all startled at this sudden and unex-

pected result. I was alarmed, for I could not wake her up. Dr Atkinson, however, managed to restore her to her senses; but after this incident the Bath lady took a violent hatred to me, and would not enter the house if I happened to be there. I also willed her not to come.

I was anxious to earn money in order to be able to pursue my art studies, and hearing that a clergyman and his wife living in the country required a young lady who could speak French fluently, and teach drawing to some boy pupils who resided in the vicarage, I applied.

At first my youth was an objection; but the wife of the vicar, having interviewed me, was so pleased with my fluency in French, and impressed by the medal I had won at South Kensington, that she offered me £60 a year.

"I wanted that sum badly, and though I disliked the idea of teaching it would only be for a little while, and the money would enable me to pursue my art studies. At that period I had dreams of becoming as great as Madame Lebrun or Rosalba.

I deeply regretted saying adieu to the kindly Carmichaels; but I was full of energy, and a doing-nothing life was odious to one of my temperament. *Agir c'est vivre* was then my motto.

I have never pitied people who have work to do—on the contrary! But I pity and sympathise with those who have no regular occupation, who have to kill time in some way or other, who, consequently, feel bored—*ennuyé*—and who really quite enjoy bad or indifferent health. It is a form of indulgence. Alas! too frequently it is their only occupation.

## A PARSON'S HOME

### I MEET A LUNATIC

GENERAL CARMICHAEL insisted on my stowing under the seat of the railway carriage which was to convey me to the vicarage in the Midland shire a couple of bottles of his execrable wine, a large plum cake, and an enormous heap of sandwiches. He also made me a present of a splendid waterproof cloak, a pair of goloshes, and a box of homœopathic globules. "Now you can face your new walk in life. May God bless you, dear child ; and be sure and take this," indicating the raspberry wine under the seat.

The train moved out of the station. I felt that, as I had no money to enable me to continue art studies, I was wise to take this post ; still, I had a kind of sinking of the heart when speeding towards the unknown : I was so lonely. The train stopped at a station. A tall, elderly man, who looked as if he belonged to the military set, entered my carriage. He at once asked me if I wished the window open or shut ; then he offered me a rug, which he informed me he had purchased in Russia.

He was talking pleasantly about his travels, when unexpectedly and suddenly he came up close to me, and



fixing his queer, shifty, yellow-brown eyes on my face, exclaimed in an excited tone of voice,—

“I know why you attract me. I see it now; you are the living image of my third wife; she died two years ago. I believe you are her reincarnation, but you have more mischief in your face. She was a saint; her eyes were heavenly, but yours have devilry. I like a spice of the devil in a girl.”

I felt uneasy. Was this man insane? I had heard that it is wiser, when speaking to a lunatic, to keep one's eyes steadily fixed on his, and not to show any fear.

I recollect that, though trembling inwardly, I showed no outward fear of this individual.

“I daresay a mixture of the angel and devil prevents one being monotonous,” I answered, staring as calmly as I could in his face.

“Just so, I should not care to live always with an angel. My fourth wife must have a spicy flavour. I want to be amused. I cannot bear a dull, preachy woman. My next wife must not have a long nose like a knife, but a nice, round, little nose like yours. I am so particular about the shape, and like it soft; its more womanly.”

The train was now slackening. I was sitting near the door; so, in case of emergency, I could have jumped out and stood on the steps.

“What did your third wife die of?” I asked in a sympathetic voice.

“She was murdered by the doctor. Oh, never go near any of them, they are humbugs and know nothing. I shall never let another one come inside my house—

promise me." Then he put a big hand on mine, which he grasped. "What a dear little hand; oh, tell me that you will marry me! I am perhaps too old—but better to be an old man's darling, is it not?" He threw himself at my feet.

Just then the train slackened; I beckoned to the guard. He opened the door, and a tall man entered the carriage.

"I regret this much," exclaimed the guard, helping me out of the carriage. "This gentleman is a harmless lunatic, but he managed to escape from his keeper." He then put me in a ladies' carriage.

I was nervous and shaken, and glad to drink a little of the General's wine.

When I reached the station, having been sent a photograph of the parson and his wife, I recognised the worthy couple standing on the platform.

The Rev. Mr B. reminded me of a goat. He had long, drooping whiskers, very tiny eyes buried in pendulous cheeks; he wore a white necktie, a black shiny coat, waistcoat and trousers, a soft felt hat; a thick gold chain and a gold cross reposed in a clerical fashion on his well-developed gastronomic region.

Mrs B. was in appearance the ordinary country parson's wife. She wore a large black hat, tied resolutely under her chin, an ill-fitting cloth jacket, and very thick boots, turned up at the toes. She had long, protruding teeth and sandy hair, but she had bright, pleasant, blue eyes.

They lived in a large house surrounded by a garden. There were six boy pupils—four were members of the aristocracy, the other two were sons of merchants.

I liked them, and being young myself and fond of fun, got on very well with the pupils ; but the Rev. Mr B. did not excite in me a feeling of respect and veneration. He was not my notion of a servant of the Almighty, though in many ways he did his duty ; but he tried too much to serve two masters—God and Mammon ! At that early period of my life I thought that the clergy ought to live on a higher plane than the laity ; eschew the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, lead ascetic lives, and consecrate themselves entirely to good and charitable works. Youth is apt to be severe in its judgments ; especially is this the case when it is embodied in a girl like myself, whose perceptive faculties were keen and whose sense of the ludicrous was highly developed ; I lacked the sense of veneration. The so-called servants of God, from the bishop to the curate, whom I then came across, were the most comfortable men I had ever met ; none of them seemed animated with that religious fervour which one supposes ought to permeate the lives of men who devote their existence to preaching the Gospel. There were constant five-o'clock teas at the vicarage, or dull dinners, when the affairs of the parish were discussed and interlarded with gossip about the aristocratic and county families of the neighbourhood. Most of the curates were frivolously inclined ; their garments and bleating tone of voice—reminding me of sheep—were the outward signs of their calling. The Church of England struck me as dead-alive ; there was no vitality or inspiration amongst the clergy I met. The Rev. Mr B. continually made me think of a prosperous first-class undertaker I had seen at a funeral in London.

The household was extremely conventional. Family prayers were at a quarter to eight, when all the servants assembled in the dining-room. The service lasted ten minutes, then came breakfast, Mr B., Mrs B., the six pupils, a curate, a tutor, a Miss B., the only daughter, and myself. I was astonished the first morning after my arrival to see that all the boiled eggs were placed in front of Mr B. He decapitated them all, smelt each in turn, and, after having performed this ceremony, he solemnly took two ; the remainder of the headless eggs were offered to us.

I suppose my face betrayed the astonishment I felt, for I was sitting next Mrs B. She whispered to me,—

“Ah, my dear husband's digestion is so weak, he has to be so careful what he eats. If he were to swallow an egg that was not quite new laid, he would suffer internally. Poor man, it is indeed sad to be such a martyr to indigestion,” turning her eyes lovingly towards her ample spouse, who was devouring hot buttered toast and the recently laid eggs with evident devout and intense relish.

One of the boys winked at me. I had great difficulty not to burst out in hilarious laughter, and pinched myself in order to try and look serious.

At dinner I noticed that the most delicate morsels were put on Mr B.'s plate by his devoted wife. Nobody had enough currant jelly with their mutton, for it happened that it was particularly good for the vicar's stomach.

“The vicar's stomach !”

That became a sort of household word. I drew a full-length portrait in pen and ink of the vicar, in

which I gave perhaps undue proportion to that important member of the human body.

The boys seemed devoted to me, and treated me like an elder sister ; they got on very well with drawing and French. But there was one exception, a scion of the aristocrats, with charming manners but a weak brain ; his French was hopeless. He would mix up phrases in an incongruous manner which caused much amusement, such as saying in French, "Have you dined?" for "It is a fine day," and "good-morning" for "good-night!" etc., etc.

I got into several small scrapes with the vicar—my unconventional ways shocked him. One afternoon I went off for a long prowling ; it was warm, and I was so tired that I did not care to walk back four or five miles. Happening to see an empty cart, I asked the driver if he would kindly give me a lift.

I was seated in the cart fanning myself with my straw hat, looking rather dishevelled, when, lo, who should be walking leisurely through the wood but the Reverend Mr B. with one of the chief magnates of the county! I can never forget the look of astonished disgust in the fat vicar's face. His little eyes glimmered like gimlets. He called me into his study ; he was seated in a large armchair, his podgy, fat hands on his knees, something like a Japanese idol. "How could you demean yourself so," he said to me, "by riding in a common cart? Lord G. must have noticed you. I only hope," gasped out the vicar, "that he did not know that you are teaching French and drawing here ; his son is a pupil!"

"I see nothing dreadful about it," I retorted. "I



was tired ; there are no cabs or hansoms here ; better people than I am have ridden in carts. I trust that I shall never do anything worse than that, Mr B. ! ”

His small eyes, like two currants in his large suet-pudding face, flashed angrily. How could I dare to think differently ?

“ My dear, young lady, you must learn discretion and regard to appearances ; it would harm me in the eyes of others if it got about that a young lady teacher in this establishment rode about the neighbourhood in a common cattle cart ! ”

One late afternoon I heard groans issuing from the vicar's study. I inquired of one of the boys what was the matter.

“ Only a pain in my dear husband's stomach,” answered the boy, mimicking Mrs B.'s voice.

“ The fact is he ate too much *pâté de foie gras* at supper, poor man ! ”

I remained eight months at the vicarage. At the end of that time I had had more than enough of that conventional life ; besides I was fortunate in getting a commission to copy for Lady Burdett Coutts a Sassoferrato “ Holy Family ” in the Louvre.

What joy to return once more to beautiful Paris, to enjoy not only art, but liberty—liberty of ideas, of ways ; to be *myself*, not a kind of machine, continually acting a part in order to satisfy people, who though perhaps they endeavoured to do their little best, did not inspire me with a feeling of admiration or veneration.



## MORE ABOUT ROBERT BROWNING

BEFORE starting for Paris I spent some time with my family who were now settled in a cosy little house in South Kensington. My mother had gathered round her a little *côterie* of friends ; she was still very handsome, and her conversational powers were most brilliant. My father, as dreamy as ever, was writing a novel ; one sister was trying her hand at literature, and had achieved a success ; one brother had a Civil Service appointment in London, the other was in America. My other sister was married.

Miss Browning came frequently to see my mother. She had lost her old father, and was living with her brother, Robert, the poet, in Warwick Crescent, Maida Vale, in a house overlooking the canal. "Pen," the son of the poet and Elizabeth Barrett Browning, was studying painting at Antwerp with Professor Hyermann. He had more disposition for art than for literature, and was happier in Belgium than at Oxford. His first picture, "A Worker in Brass," had been hung on the line in the Royal Academy, and sold, which was a great encouragement.

One afternoon I wended my way to Warwick Crescent to see the friend of my childhood, Miss Browning. She was not much altered, and as lively as

ever. She was sitting in the drawing-room, so picturesquely furnished with tapestries on the walls, carved oak furniture, and works of art.

I looked out of the back window, and there I saw Mr Robert Browning nursing a goose, absolutely carrying it in his arms.

"Ah, our pet has been ill," exclaimed Miss Browning, "so Robert is looking after it."

The poet came into the hall with the goose. I laughed, remarking that it was a queer kind of pet.

"It is so clever and affectionate," answered Mr Browning. "It is not well, so I am looking after it; the goose follows me about just like a dog, does he not, Sarianna?" appealing to his sister.

"Yes, indeed," answered his sister, stroking the goose. "Robert is devoted to all kinds of animals, but it is difficult in a London house to harbour dogs and cats, monkeys, owls and geese. However, at present we have only got this dear goose. Pen has a *ménagerie* at Dinant. He has inherited his father's love of animals."

"Now a truce to the goose and its perfections," exclaimed Mr Browning. "Come," linking his arm in mine, "and look at Pen's picture."

He opened the drawing-room door, and pointed to an easel, on which was a landscape—a river, a boat, distant hills in evening light. I think it was called "Solitude."

"Very poetical," I remarked; "I like it extremely."

"Yes," exclaimed Robert Browning, "I am pleased with Pen; he is working hard; he is a man now, not a mere mouse. Dear Millais came here yesterday,

and praised the picture enthusiastically. Millais is generous ; he appreciates the work of the younger men, and always encourages Pen. I feel certain that he will succeed in art, for he has found his vocation at last."

It was really touching to witness Robert Browning's pride in his son's works.

Another afternoon I called with my mother, who was anxious to get Mr Browning to read a volume of poems by a young and persistent poet, who wanted to get Browning's verdict on his first published volume, and had entreated my mother to beg the poet to read his verses. He was a mere bud of a poet then, immature but ambitious.

"Certainly, I will look over it," answered Mr Browning. "I have just received a batch of books, chiefly poems" (shrugging his shoulders); "but after all it is only right to help those who sincerely strive to attain success in literature or art ; even those who fail are interesting."

That afternoon Robert Browning was in a particularly genial mood. My mother asked him to play her something on the piano. He instantly complied, and performed an intricate fugue by Bach, his favourite composer.

Though as a rule I did not think that Mr Browning looked like a poet, that evening he looked what he really was—a strong poet-thinker as he sat at the piano in the dim evening, the firelight illuminating his finely-poised head, with its thick grey hair ; his eyes so bright and piercing ; the well-shaped hands moving eloquently over the ivory keys. His fair skin and features in that semi-obscurity seemed carved out of Carrara

marble. The background of tapestry and Florentine furniture, *bric-à-brac*, and last but not least the marble bust of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, made a most harmonious setting.

Another time I called at Warwick Crescent, and met Robert Browning in the hall. He was in evening dress. "I am sorry," he exclaimed, "to have to go out just as you are coming in, but Sarianna will be delighted to see you ; poor thing, she is often alone in the London season." Then he flushed up. "I am a bit annoyed to-night for I have been reading an unpleasant article in a magazine about myself, accusing me of being always seen in 'gilded *salons*' amongst the great and wealthy. I should like to rub the writer's nose in this article. What on earth can it concern him if I am fond of society? What has that to do with the quality of my work? The fool! What a lot of asses there are in this world to be sure. I do like to be with refined people who appreciate me ; it is a pleasure ; wealthy people have leisure to read, and their houses are pleasant. I am not ashamed to confess that I do enjoy being with cultured folk, besides I find that mixing with others and the friction of ideas are necessary to a writer. With painters it is different—unless they want commissions for portraits, etc.," he added smiling.

Robert Browning invariably made himself pleasant in society ; he talked to everyone, young and old, plain or beautiful, and was generally agreeable.

He had a fund of anecdotes, which he related with zest. He seemed to forget himself and think of others. He was no doubt a bit of a snob, but that is a small

and common fault, especially in England. To his sister he was always affectionate and attentive ; he thoroughly appreciated her devotion, intelligence and common sense. They were excellent comrades, both fond of taking immense walks. During their holidays abroad, when not on visits to friends, they went to inns and quiet hotels, never grumbling at the simplicity of the living, though Robert Browning thoroughly enjoyed the good things of life. He was affectionate, almost gushing, to people he liked, and had a number of lady worshippers—young, middle-aged and elderly ; they were mostly widows. It amused me to watch his behaviour to each and all. He liked them for different qualities and varieties of disposition. They were all wealthy women, and he managed to get the best from all of them. He paid them visits at their different beautiful places on the Continent, was always pleasant, and tried to make others happy. His exuberance of manner, which amounted to gush, was a part of himself ; mere acquaintances were often deceived by it, imagining that Mr Browning, for some unaccountable reason, had taken a particular fancy to them. I recollect one afternoon when visiting mutual friends, a wealthy American widow rushed in, exclaiming, “I thought till to-day that Mr Browning only cared for me platonically, but such is not the case, I assure you.”

We all laughed, remarking that the poet’s manner was generally affectionate ; that it meant nothing but hearty genial goodwill towards most women.

This particular widow did not relish this interpretation. She had secret hopes of being the successor of

the great Elizabeth Barrett Browning ; but time showed that the poet never intended marrying again.

One afternoon, as I was hurrying to a Theosophical meeting, I met Mr Robert Browning, and told him where I was going.

"You! Well, I always gave you credit for common sense. Now, don't go ; it will not do you any good. I once went to a lecture, and when it was over, had not the slightest notion what they were all driving at."

He talked to me on different subjects so agreeably, that when I looked at my watch it was too late to go to the meeting.

"I talked long on purpose!" Mr Browning exclaimed, chuckling. "Nothing has ever, or ever can, replace the teachings of that grand book of books, the Bible. Stick to that ; you can't do better. I hate everything concerned with Mahatmas and so-called spiritualism."

Robert Browning's poem, "La Saisiaz" (Savoyard for the sun) was inspired by his great friend, Miss Egerton Smith. Mr Browning and his sister went to stay with her at her lovely place "La Saisiaz" (Savoy), in September 1877. She was wealthy, and at that period middle-aged. They had first met in Florence, when she was young. The love of music was a great bond between them. Miss Egerton Smith was a shy, reserved woman, and led a secluded life. Robert Browning was one of the few people she really cared for. They used to go to concerts together, and she always called for him in her carriage.

In "La Saisiaz" Browning describes the great walk



that he and Miss Smith took in order to survey, from Salive, Mont Blanc,—

“Petty feat, and yet prodigious, every side my glance was bent  
O’er the grandeur and the beauty lavished through the whole  
ascent.”

Evidently, on that memorable day, they had an interesting talk on Death and the immortality of the soul.

“Does the soul survive the body? Is there God’s self?”

“No or yes?”

“Certain am I from this life I pass into a better then.”

The next morning Miss Egerton Smith had arranged for a picnic to a beautiful spot miles away. They were to start early, but Robert Browning, who was an early riser, that morning got up even earlier than usual. When he returned to La Saisiaz the *char-à-bancs* were in the courtyard, the hampers were stowed. To the surprise of every one Miss Egerton Smith, who was the most punctual and orderly of women, had not yet appeared. As she was an anxious hostess what could keep her away as the hour for departure was striking? Some one had knocked at her door—no answer.

Mr Browning went on the balcony, and tapped at her window. “Are you ready? It is time to be off,” he shouted. Receiving no answer, he stood on tiptoe, and peeped in at her bedroom window.

To his utter amazement, he beheld Miss Smith lying on the floor, evidently unconscious. He called for his sister to come up at once. They both, accom-

panied by a servant, went into her room. To their horror and sorrow, they discovered that Miss Egerton Smith was dead. She had died suddenly of heart failure.

“Gone you were, and I shall never see that  
Earnest face again—”

“LA SAISIAZ.”

The last time I saw Mr Robert Browning alone was in his house, 29 De Vere Gardens, Kensington. He was shortly going to Italy. He was then very asthmatic, and had much oppression on his chest. He received me in the dining-room, for he was hardly equal to going upstairs. He showed me his new book-cases, brass lamps, etc. He spoke of Venice with enthusiasm, and told me that he was to be the guest of Pen and his wife at the Palazzo Rezzonico. He alluded to the chapel which his son had restored in memory of his mother, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, putting up there the inscription by Tomasea, now above Casa Guidi, in Florence. But, before going to his son he intended visiting Mrs Bronson at her lovely place “La Mura” at Asolo, Veneto. Mr Browning told me that Asolo, the first spot of Italian soil he put his foot on, had inspired “Pippa passes.” And he went on to say that Asolo was the scene of the Queen of Cyprus, Catherine Cornaro’s, exile. She had a palace there, and Cardinal Bembo was her secretary. Mrs Browning expatiated on the magnificent view from Mr Bronson’s house: the Alps on one side, the Asolean Mountains all round, and opposite, the Lombard plains, Venice, and Padua (visible on a clear day). “And then the gorgeous

sunsets from the Loggia! How I love to watch them!”

When I called again at De Vere Gardens the great poet was dead, his body lying in a coffin, covered with a pall, in the very spot where he and I had had our last interesting talk. Robert Browning died at the Palazzo Rezzonico, with his dear ones by his bedside.

There is a memorial tablet affixed on the outer wall of the Rezzonico—

A ROBERTO BROWNING,  
Morto in questo Palazzo,  
12 December 1889.  
Venezia.

Below this appear two lines, selected from his works—

“Open my heart and you will see  
Graved inside it—*Italy!*”

I was not able to go to Robert Browning's funeral at Westminster Abbey, for I was attacked by that terrible fiend, influenza.

## MRS LYNN LINTON

I WAS a little girl when I first saw Miss Eliza Lynn, and the impression she then made on me was not favourable. I dislike gush, and I distrusted her purring, caressing manner. Though I am fond of cats she reminded me too much of that animal's scratching propensity. I was afraid of her claws, for I had quickly detected that she had claws. I often heard her make bitter remarks in a soft but intense tone of voice. Sometimes I thought she resembled a bird of prey—a vulture—I had seen in Le Jardin des Plantes. She had protruding pale blue eyes shining through large gold-rimmed spectacles ; her lips were thin ; her nostrils quivered when she spoke. She had pretty golden wavy hair. I believe that many people fought shy of her because of novels she had written—*Realities*, *Aspasia* and *the Days of Pericles*—but my parents were most kind and hospitable to her. Some years afterwards, when I met her in London, she had married Mr William Linton, a talented engraver, but they were already separated. I heard that she married him for the sake of his motherless children. However, they all quarelled more or less : the marriage was a failure.

When she called—I was a young girl, and we were living in a little house in South Kensington—she

had the same old purring manner. She had just written an article in the *Saturday Review*, which had made a sensation, on the "Girl of the Period."

I asked her if she was the writer (having heard that it was the case) of this paper. As I was persistent she ended by acknowledging that she was the author. We had quite an uncivil war. I was outspoken, and told her I thought it wicked to turn against her own much younger sex. She was angry, and roundly abused English girls and women. I hit her hard by saying that she was making a *specialité* of finding fault with womankind; that she might leave this unwomanly task to men; that I considered she was a traitor in her own camp. Had not she herself, when a girl, rebelled in her own home, and gone to live in London alone in order to make a living? If she revolted in her girlhood, why make such a dead set against those of her own sex as followed the example she herself had set by breaking away from home influence?

After my outburst, Mrs Lynn Linton avoided me, but one night she happened to be at the house of a mutual acquaintance. It was shortly after the appearance of *Joshua Davidson*. This very clever work had appeared anonymously, and was a great success. The author was thought to be a poor man who had tried to live the life of Jesus Christ, and had recorded his experience, but it leaked out that it was written by Mrs Lynn Linton. When this became generally known, it injured, in a measure, the sale of her book.

Mrs Linton swooped down upon me, looking like a furious vulture, and asked me if I had divulged the fact that she was the author of *Joshua Davidson*. "As

a rule," she added, "girls were indiscreet, and I might have heard that she had written the book."

As I had not mentioned the fact, I felt inclined to slap her face, but restrained myself, as she might be a dangerous enemy. I believe she got an absurdly small sum for *Joshua Davidson*—about twelve guineas—but for her next novel she received £500.

Mrs Linton made it her own particular line of business to attack women, chiefly in the *Saturday Review*, by means of ill-natured papers such as "The Mature Syren," "Feminine Affectations," "Feline Amenities," etc. It was unworthy of such a gifted woman to attack her own sex so bitterly in the public Press. I once heard her exclaim at an evening gathering at Dr Westland Marston's, where men were in the majority, "Ah, even the best woman is not to be compared to the worst man." Mrs Lynn Linton had many generous qualities. What a pity that the message she gave to the world was a melancholy one—an expression of a more or less profound disgust with the human race, with all human institutions, and especially, with women.

In a letter she wrote to me occurs the following passage :—

"Thank you very much for your kind letter. I am so glad the book amused and interested you. No ; no character was drawn from a living person. I hold, and have always held, this to be bad art. If you want to make a character life-like it must be partly typical and partly the logical result of circumstances. As with 'Caleb,' given a sensitive and retrospective nature with



large personal ungainliness, could you not come to such a person? Would he not be the natural result of a timid, 'feckless' mother, and a strong-handed father, whose will had crushed his self-esteem, but had not made him obedient to the desired point of social self-assertion? The two characters of my book which were created from logical results of foregone conditions are 'Leam Dundas' and 'Caleb Stagg,' and they are among the most living of all I have done.—Very affectionately yours,

E. LYNN LINTON."

## A SUNDAY EVENING AT DOCTOR WESTLAND MARSTON'S

IT was at Doctor Westland Marston's (the dramatist) house at one of his Sunday evenings, that I met that erratic, whimsical genius, W. G. Wills.

That Sunday was my first introduction into London literary and artistic society. I went with Mrs Lynn Linton. The long rat-a-tat-tat was not answered with the celerity she expected. When the servant let us in, the hawk-like stare of my literary duenna had the effect of making the maid-of-all-work wince. She faltered out in a timid, apologetic tone of voice, "I was in the kitchen, mum, preparing the tray."

"And what a place to deposit it!" retorted Mrs Linton, glaring at her through her large, gold-rimmed spectacles, and then at the floor on which reposed the tray covered with glasses and soda-water bottles. "I was nearly walking into it and smashing the whole concern."

"There is so much to do upstairs as well as downstairs on Sunday evenings, and I am the only servant," faltered the poor girl. She then flounced into the drawing-room with the tray, and left us standing in the hall.

There was a varied collection of masculine hats—billycocks, soft and hard felts, wide-awakes, more or

less battered and greasy looking ; the well-brushed top hat was conspicuous by its absence. The great-coats and woollen comforters were decidedly shabby, but I gazed at them with a feeling akin to reverence, for at that youthful period of my existence I considered shabbiness a special attribute of genius. We took off our wraps in a dusty den filled with books and periodicals. A few feminine garments were piled up on an old horsehair sofa.

There was a loud hum of voices, some hearty laughter mingling with the clink of glasses and the popping of soda-water bottles as we entered the drawing-room, which was filled with the perfume of tobacco. A haze of blue smoke hung like a thick veil over everybody and everything. The scene recalled a picture I had lately noticed, by Teniers ; but this time it was not boors, but authors, drinking. Nearly every man had a tumbler in his hand, and a cigar or a pipe in his mouth.

Dr Westland Marston greeted us with genial courtesy. There was distinction in the voice and manner of the author of *The Patrician's Daughter*. He introduced me to his eldest daughter, Nellie, who was married to Mr Arthur O'Shaughnessy, a poet ; then to his son, the gifted but blind poet, Philip Bourke Marston. He had a fine intellectual head and brows. The sightless eyes gave a pathetic interest to his face. He had a peculiar choppy utterance, a slight hesitation of speech ; but what surprised me most while gazing at his sightless eyes was the way in which he constantly alluded to his keen sense of beauty and horror of ugliness. He spoke of his admiration for colour, of his

love of flowers. I remember, when telling him that I was copying at the National Gallery, he exclaimed, "I hope you don't go there by St Martin's Lane! That neighbourhood makes me shudder. I go a long way to avoid ugly streets. When I get inside the Gallery, then I expand with delight, How I revel in Turner! and many of the old masters fascinate me. That portrait of Andrea del Sarto, by himself, exercises a kind of spell. I stand in front of it, always with more and more admiration. It is a marvel!"

The American poetess, Louise Chandler Moulton, now came forward and talked to Philip. She was a pleasant-looking woman, with a nice smile and voice.

There was a galaxy of celebrities :—"Earthly Paradise" Poet Morris, in a rough grey coat and blue, collarless shirt, looking handsome and unconventional; Old Horne, the author of "Orion"; and the painter Maddox Browne, with his daughter, who married Hueffer, the musical critic; Theodore Watts, and Swinburne, a small, slight man, with a big tawny head; Mathilde Blind, a poetess, with her strong, Germanic accent and hearty laugh, heard in every part of the room. Mr M'Coll, of the *Athenæum*—formal, proper, and respectable—wearing black kid gloves, and a well-brushed black coat, looking very uncomfortable, for he was surrounded by authoresses, who wanted notices of their respective books. The lovely actress, Adelaide Nielsen, was coquetting with a dramatic critic. There was the amiable and gifted Richard Garnett, of the British Museum, a quaint, smiling *savant*; Lady Duffus Hardy and her daughter, Iza. There was a great sprinkling of budding poets, wearing their hair

long, and attitudinising a great deal. When the talk was at its highest pitch, there was a particularly loud knock at the front door.

“Oh, that is Wills! No mistaking his knock,” remarked Dr Westland Marston, now addressing me. “You will, my dear young lady, see the very king of Bohemia! the Oliver Goldsmith of our time—kind-hearted, generous, simple; no one’s enemy but his own, full of oddities and inconsistencies, a true gentleman, an author, an artist. But here he comes!

“W. G. Wills,  
King of Bohemia,

poet, novelist, painter, and last, but not least, dramatic writer! This young lady,” indicating me, “is studying art, and you are to give her advice.” So saying, our genial host departed, and my hand was heartily shaken by the King of Bohemia.

## KING OF BOHEMIA—W. G. WILLS

(AUTHOR OF "CHARLES THE FIRST," "OLIVIA,"  
"MAN OF AIRLIE," ETC., ETC.)

THERE are people whose mere entrance into a room diffuses an atmosphere of geniality and *bonhomie*, an *aura* of kindliness (as the Theosophists express it). When Mr Wills appeared at Doctor Marston's, the pleasant, burly voice, "How are you, my friend?" or "How are you, old fellow?" rang cheerily through the room; there was a general shaking of hands and a flutter of expectation in the feminine camp. This flutter was especially visible in a young lady who had a Botticelli appearance—reddish fluffy hair, like a haystack on fire, a white intense face, crimson lips, and a very square jaw. She wore a loose, faded olive-green garment, low at the neck, displaying a long thin throat. Her peculiar drooping attitude impressed me. Having been brought up in Paris it was the first time I had seen such a being. I fancied she must be a genius, consumed by sacred fires. When Mr Wills appeared, this strange-looking maiden threw herself into another picturesque pose, evidently for the benefit of the King of Bohemia.

Though the atmosphere of the room was like a hot-house Mr Wills kept on his thick grey ulster. His



head was Shakespearian ; the brow was high and intellectual, but the grey, kindly eyes had just a suspicion of cunning. The bow of his blue necktie had slipped under his ear ; indeed he looked particularly untidy, and there was a streak of charcoal (he had evidently been drawing) across his nose.

“Mr Wills is so absent-minded that he probably forgets that he has two sides to his face, so he washes one cheek and omits the other. Does he not remind you of a semi-restored picture by an old master, one side in light, the other in the shade?” whispered Dr Westland Marston. “But he is a dear creature ; the soul of good nature.”

From one of Mr Wills’s pockets bulged a roll of paper, evidently manuscript ; from another a long clay pipe peeped out, embedded in loose tobacco. His boots were splashed, his clothes unbrushed. Notwithstanding these disadvantages Mr Wills had the unmistakable air of a gentleman.

“Have a glass of whisky, Wills, and here is a good cigar. You are rather late, old fellow,” remarked our host.

“I have had an accident. My hood has been picked,” answered the King of Bohemia.

“What do you mean by your hood being picked?” was the general exclamation.

“I mean, my friends” (Mr Wills’s voice was so ripe and mellow that we could all hear what he was saying), “that my hood,” indicating the appendage which hung loosely and simply behind his back, “has been picked of its contents. I had filled it with dainties for poor old D., who has been very ill, but

is now convalescent ; so to give him a little cheer I put a woodcock, a bottle of port, grapes and oranges into the hood of this ulster. It is rather foggy to-night ; I was thinking of a play I am writing for Henry Irving, so noticed nothing till I got to D.'s lodgings. When I arrived I suddenly perceived that the hood was uncommonly light ; everything had been stolen except one tiny orange ! ”

A general exclamation of “ Too bad ! ” mingled with laughter, greeted this speech.

“ How characteristic ! ” exclaimed Dr Westland Marston. “ This is a worthy pendant of the fowl episode.”

“ Oh, what was the fowl episode ? ” murmured the Botticelli girl in a deep contralto voice.

“ I am not going to speak any more about my unfortunate absence of mind,” remarked the King of Bohemia, “ but if my peccadilloes amuse you, here is Mr H. He was the sufferer, so he can relate the incident with feeling.”

A white-headed man, with a long white beard, suggestive of Father Christmas, now came forward.

“ Yes, I can speak from experience, for I was the victim.”

“ Now, you know I made up for it,” exclaimed Mr Wills, puffing away at his cigar.

“ Yes, indeed ; I never had a better dinner than the one you gave me at the Café Royal.”

“ But do tell us the fowl incident,” I exclaimed ; “ we are longing to hear all about it.”

“ Well,” continued the long-bearded man, “ Wills invited me to dinner one afternoon when I met him

in the Strand. I accepted, reminding him that, as he was absent-minded, he'd better make a note of the evening. As he had no paper in his pocket, he wrote the date of it on his shirt cuff. When the appointed evening arrived I went to his studio. The door was opened by Wills, and I could see by the blank expression of his face that he had forgotten all about the appointment.

“‘Ah, old fellow!’ exclaimed Mr Wills, ‘do not be too hard upon me, the cuff went to the wash and the date with it.’”

Mr H. threw back his head and laughed, and I then noticed that he had no collar. The long beard hid a multitude of omissions.

“But Wills was up to the occasion,” continued Mr H. “‘All right,’ says he; ‘you are in time. There is a fowl in the pot boiling here. Just come in and wait a few minutes. I have a model posing for me—an Ophelia—she is draped. Come in and smoke a pipe. The fowl will soon be done.’”

“I had my misgivings, but walked inside, and we sat upon the only chair not crowded with paints, brushes or palettes, while Wills proceeded with his painting.

“I may add that the golden-haired model was perched upon a throne, and a more saucy hussy I never did see.

“After puffing away at my pipe for at least twenty minutes, feeling deucedly hungry, I groaned. This sound had the effect of reminding Wills that I was present. He exclaimed, in a dreamy voice,—

“‘The fowl must be boiled by this time,’ and,

coming forward, he lifted the lid of the pot and peered inside.

“‘It is very odd,’ he remarked, ‘but I cannot see the fowl. Just come here, Elsie,’ says he to the model, who descended from her perch, ‘and look.’

“‘I can see nothing,’ she exclaimed, laughing.

“‘Did you not witness my putting the fowl in here, Elsie?’

“‘No, I did not,’ says she; ‘but you told me you had done so.’

“‘Extraordinary!’ ejaculated Wills. ‘No one has been here, so the bird cannot have been stolen.’

“Well, the long and short of it is that, a week or two later, I called again at the studio, and noticed a peculiar odour. I said to Wills, ‘What is that that smells so queerly?’ ‘Oh,’ says he, ‘it is nothing, merely some oil study drying near the stove.’ But I was curious, and, if I may so express myself, went in the direction of the smell, and there—guess what I discovered?—there was the old fowl, wrapped up in a piece of brown paper behind one of the large canvases, in a state of decomposition!”

“‘Ah!’ said Wills. ‘Now I know how it all happened. When the fowl was brought in there came a smart visitor—Lady G.—about sittings for her portrait. I must have thrown the fowl behind a canvas and forgotten all about it. But now, old fellow, *do* shut up!’

We all laughed, and Wills ensconced himself in another armchair, and I heard him say to the Botticelli girl,—

“I want you to do me a great favour.”

"What is it? Anything to help your art?" stretching out her long, thin neck.

"I want you to give me some sittings for my Ophelia. You have the mouth, chin and throat I require, and the eyes would be perfect if you had a more crazy expression."

"I can put that in," she answered. "Yes, anything to help a painter in his glorious mission," turning her eyes up to the ceiling.

"Ah, my dear young friend, art is heaven or hell! I am generally attending the funeral of my own ideals. It is a delight—the creation of beauty—but I cannot paint to order. Unfortunately, I have commissions to execute—babies in pastels—such a nuisance."

"Oh, nonsense, Mr Wills!" remarked a stout lady with a shrill voice. "You must be more practical. Babies in pastels are more paying than Ophelias in oils."

"You speak as if art was a mere grocery store. Talking of babies in pastels, Her Majesty the Queen has commanded me to paint one of the Royal grandchildren."

"I congratulate you," retorted the plump lady. "Do yourself justice, and your fortune will be made if you execute worthily the Royal commission."

"I certainly did not jump at the order, for I telegraphed to Windsor saying that I was engaged, and could not just then execute the Royal order."

"How preposterous! Great heavens, how very terrible! Why it was worse than a crime! It was a *bévue*, as Talleyrand would have said. You must be as



mad as the Ophelia you are painting to throw away such a magnificent chance."

"Do not get excited, my friend," said Mr Wills, with a bland smile. "It is all right now; I have been to Windsor and had a little joke with the Queen about the Imperial baby. But I loathe the notion of becoming a fashionable portrait painter; that, indeed, would be the death of art. How can one do justice to one's real ideals."

"You are prejudiced; and if you really think so, Mr Wills, why don't you get up a company for improving the upper classes," remarked the plump lady.

"Or a company to abolish bores?" remarked a supercilious long-haired youth in a brown velveteen coat, who had recently produced a volume of poems.

"I think that a company to suppress mild poems and weak novels would be very welcome," added the lady *sotto voce*.

"In fact a society to suppress the so-called shrieking and dissatisfied woman—the woman with emotions misunderstood—*La femme incomprise*! The woman who thinks that marriage is a failure, and leaves her husband in order to live out her own life, which is often not worth living. It would be a grand thing to put them all under a big pump, and give them iced shower-baths," remarked Mrs Lynn Linton.

But this threatened uncivil war was suddenly put a stop to by the entrance, at long past midnight, of a peculiar looking man, wearing top boots, with a belt round his waist, and flowing hair—Joaquim Millar.

Mr Wills wrote parts of *Charles the First*, *Olivia*,



*Eugene Aram* in the kitchen of our house in South Kensington. It was a large, bright room. He remarked that it looked like a Dutch kitchen, and inspired him. He used to read aloud what he had written to my father, in whose judgment he relied. He consulted him about the plays. As he smoked his long clay pipe, with a bottle of whisky by his side, and our pet cat purring on the hearth, W. G. Wills looked the picture of contentment. He sometimes had great arguments with my father, and now and then grew excited. I recollect an argument they had about *Hamlet*. Was he really mad, or had he feigned madness? They disagreed, and Mr Wills lost his temper. I had to beg of him to leave the house. The next morning he called to apologise for having been rather rude.

I have seen Mr Wills, quite oblivious of the audience, weep bitterly over passages in his plays, especially on first nights.

## JOAQUIM MILLAR

(THE POET OF THE SIERRAS)

THIS astounding creature, who hailed from California, I also met at Bohemian gatherings of poets, artists, and novelists. He appeared at past midnight, wearing top-boots, spurs, a belt round his waist, and he wore his golden hair in ringlets. Joaquim was extremely handsome. He affected the airs of a noble savage, which produced a great effect, especially on the young women present ; indeed, he made many conquests. I saw him pat the hair of a lady, and in an enthusiastic tone of voice exclaim, " This reminds me of the locks of one of my squaws ! " This extraordinary being was really invented by Swinburne, who took him about for a time ; Millar was a fillibuster with a dash of romance, a poet who did not even know the laws of versification. Swinburne introduced him to the Rossettis, Maddox Brownes, Westland Marstons, and last, but not least, to the greatest critic in London, Theodore Watts-Dunton, who was most friendly to Joaquim Millar, criticised his poems severely, but saw the good in them, for which Millar was grateful, and he improved in his work.

For some months Joaquim Millar's personality produced a sensation in society. He was so original

in his talk, a very child of the Sierras ; but after a time Swinburne got tired of him. He would drop in, and call upon literary people at all sorts of unheard of hours, and keep them talking till three and four in the morning. I recollect he went to see Mr Robert Browning, who at first was interested and amused at the top-boots, spurs, and belt. Joaquim remarked that he liked Brownings' little cottage ! This was the house of the poet in Warwick Crescent, Maida Vale !

After a time the literary and artistic clique showed Millar a certain coldness. His last visit was to Mr Watts-Dunton. Then the Californian poet started off for a two years' voyage round the world. Not long ago Joaquim Millar went to Klondyke, and there made a good deal of money.

## DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

I WAS still a girl when I first met Dante Gabriel Rossetti at Doctor Westland Marston's house, at one of his Bohemian Sunday evening receptions. His weird personality, the great charm and beauty of his voice—there was a magic in it—arrested my immediate attention. I picked him out at once from the galaxy of intellectual people present. I asked Doctor Westland Marston who was that dark, mysterious man neither smoking nor drinking.

"Dante Gabriel Rossetti," was the answer, "the great painter and poet."

There was a look of power and a certain sensuousness in the dark eyes shining out from the olive-skinned face; the nose slightly aquiline, with the quivering sensitive nostrils, the full under lip, the rather heavy jaw, denoted the artistic temperament; the brow and sweep of the head bespoke intellect. I listened with rapt attention to what Dante Rossetti was saying. He was discussing pictures with Mr Maddox Browne, the painter. I suppose the eager expression of my face interested the great man; he suddenly addressed me, inquiring if I was fond of pictures. I answered, "Yes;" also, that I had been copying, in the Louvre, "La Joconde" (Mona Lisa), by Leonardo da Vinci.

“ Oh, what a masterpiece ! ” he exclaimed. “ Such mystery in the woman’s face — so subtle, and that wonderful inner smile.” I cannot remember what Dante Rossetti said to me, but the impression was delightful. There was an eerie charm, a great personal magnetism about him, that impressed me. He invited me to visit his studio in Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, on the following Sunday.

But when the Sunday arrived I am ashamed to confess that I forgot the kind invitation till it was too late to call. I wrote to tell him how sorry I was, and asked if I might come on the following Sunday with my mother.

Evidently Dante Rossetti was piqued and annoyed at my negligence, for I received from him a stiff note, in which he wrote that he had expected me on that particular afternoon, and could not at present make another appointment.

I felt that I deserved this rebuke. I neither saw nor heard from the poet - painter for some months, but one Sunday evening, when I was again at Doctor Marston’s, I heard his beautiful sonorous voice. I had not the courage to meet Dante Rossetti after my *bevue*, I now fully realised my carelessness, so I rushed into an inner room, and seated myself in a dark corner close to a curtain, hoping not to be observed. I noticed that Doctor Marston smiled, for he knew that I was now afraid to encounter Dante Rossetti.

But in less than a quarter of an hour I saw the poet approaching the corner where I was hiding. I heard his mellow laugh when he caught sight of me. He stretched out his hand, sat by my side on an old sofa,

and forgave me, or, as he jocularly remarked, he gave me absolution! What magnetism there was in his personality! I soon felt at my ease; he amused me, and uttered many witty things. I liked him; there was a good deal of the John Bull about him. He was not affected. Great men so seldom are. There was a kind of nonchalance in his manner, and he was dressed carelessly. I noticed that his hands were well formed. He talked chiefly about some of his pet animals—an Indian bull, a hedgehog, cat, etc.

The following Sunday I went with my mother to pay Rossetti a visit, and knocked at the great man's door before the time appointed.

We were ushered into a picturesque room on the ground floor—the “green dining-room,” I believe, it was called. It looked out into the garden, which was fairly large and untidy. I spied some queer animals there—a funny little bull, a hedgehog, kangaroos, a monkey.

When Dante Rossetti appeared he smilingly remarked, as he shook hands, that he was glad I had not again forgotten my appointment! Then noticing that I was watching the animals, he exclaimed, “I have a passion for beasts; they never bore me, and constantly amuse me; they are so unconscious, and their movements are full of grace.”

We followed him into the fine studio. On the walls and easels were pictures of weird women, with yearning, sad faces. They all had long necks—which seemed to me out of proportion—very thick lips, fuzzy hair, and powerful hands. They had a strong family likeness, and seemed to suffer from hopeless love. I felt



as if I had suddenly wandered into a tropical lunatic asylum. I longed for fresh air, green fields, flowers ; for the sight of rosy-cheeked, healthy girls, for milkmaids and peasants ; for sunshine, jollity and vitality. The atmosphere of the studio seemed to overpower me, it was so intense ; still, I appreciated the poetry and the gorgeous colouring ; and the strange, eerie personality of the painter impressed me.

These weary men and women were painted from different models ; the chief being Mrs Morris, wife of the "Earthly Paradise" Morris, Dante Rossetti's own wife, and Alice Wilding—they were strangely alike.

"Dante's Dream" fascinated me—I believe it belonged to Mr W. Graham.

I never beheld Dante Rossetti alive again, but a few years ago I visited his grave at Birchington-on-Sea.

## COPYING AT THE LOUVRE

ONE of the greatest delights I experienced in my youthful life was receiving the first money I had earned. I built no end of castles in the air, made wild projects, and dreamed that I could make a fortune.

For my teaching at the parson's I received nearly sixty guineas; that seemed to me then a considerable sum. Now I was to earn £25 for a copy at the Louvre of a "Virgin and Child" of Sassoferrato for Lady Burdett Coutts. How delighted I was to find myself at La Gare St Lazare! The turmoil, bustle, glare, glitter, restlessness, noise of the *voitures*, even the swearing of the excitable *cochers* sounded like music in my ears. A young Russian friend of mine, a pupil of Madame O'Connell's, who was studying art at Monsieur Chaplin's, came to meet me at the station. She had taken a room for me in the boarding-house where she was then residing. To my astonishment, Mr William O'Gorman Wills, the dramatist and artist, was escorting her. He was as shabbily dressed as usual, but it was pleasant to hear his cheery voice as he hailed a *fiacre*. We got into it; Mr Wills said *au revoir*, and off we rattled through the brilliant streets, stopping in front of a tall house. I rang the bell. The *concierge*, who was eating a deliciously-

smelling *râgout*, opened the *porte cochère*. I asked for Madame Dubois ; she answered, "*au troisième*." A man carried my trunk, and I went up a very highly-waxed staircase. When I rang again the door was opened by a rosy, fat *bonne*, wearing white frilled cap and white apron. She reminded me so much of my happy childhood days that I felt inclined to embrace her. She ushered me into the typical French *salon*—so cold, so orderly, with a big, gilt clock on the chimney-piece, and the floor well *frotté*.

"So glad to welcome you. Come and see your room next to mine. It is furnished in pink rose—a lucky colour, rose ; you will see everything *couleur de rose* !"

She opened a room—a dear little sanctum. On the walls were Amy Scheffer's two Mignons. The vases were filled with flowers ; everything was bright.

"Yes, I believe in the influence of surroundings," she remarked. "We are both artists, and, therefore, sensitive. I love ease and luxury !" She was wearing a delicious cashmere dressing-gown, trimmed with swansdown, her pretty feet encased in embroidered slippers. She looked so charming as she reclined in a big armchair ; she was graceful, supple, round ; her golden hair was like a halo ; her eyes dark and soft ; her mouth, though big, was lovely in shape. She had a smile that Leonardo da Vinci alone could have rendered, and which he has so inimitably painted in that famous portrait "*La Joconde*" or "*Mona Lisa*." Olga had ordered a delicious little supper, and while I was imbibing some sparkling Moselle and eating *pâté de foie gras* sandwiches, she played the piano and

sang a Russian air. Then, forgetting me, she poured her soul into her music, and in a low, tragic voice, with an intensity that appalled me, intoned "La Marseillaise." Her eyes seemed to see beyond her as she uttered the words—

"Amour sacré de la Patrie."

There were tears in her voice. Then she rattled off Schneider's famous song, "Le sabre de mon Père." She seemed to me a sphinx, an enigma, an imp, full of talent. Her painting was like herself, original.

"I have many *diavolinas* within me, perhaps seven, and they are all kicking hard. I feel the wretches! Dear old Wills calls me an undisciplined young rebel, a Will-o'-the-Wisp."

Just as she said this there was a knock at the door.

"That is Mr Wills," she exclaimed; "I know his knock. He often drops in to have a smoke and a glass of whisky and water."

Enter Mr Wills.

"How are you, my dear, saucy, little artist friend?" he exclaimed, in his cheerful, burly voice. He had a roll of paper in one hand, and the big pipe peeped out from a pocket, embedded in loose tobacco. The bow of his crimson necktie had slipped under one ear. There was a streak of Naples yellow paint across his forehead.

He shook hands with me, remarking that he was so glad I had come to Paris—the real place for all artists. The Louvre was a paradise.

Olga smoked her cigarettes, Mr Wills his big pipe. "She wants ballast, this young Russian lady," continued

Mr Wills, addressing me. "I intend to be her rudder. But when are you going to give me another sitting for my picture of Ophelia?"

Olga laughed. "Every girl Mr Wills meets has sat or is sitting for the head of Ophelia; one for the eyes, another for the nose, a third for the mouth, a fourth for chin, and so on. Now, what do you want me for now?"

"The general crazy look," he answered, smiling.

So it was arranged that she would give a sitting to Mr Wills, and that in the afternoon he would visit me at the Louvre.

Mr Wills puzzled and yet fascinated me. He had a dramatic, powerful way of expressing himself.

Twelve o'clock struck, and he bade us good-night.

The next morning, as I came out of my room, I was greeted by a very fat *bonne* in a white frilled cap, her round face beaming with good nature. She showed me the way to the *salle-à-manger*, and, as I was the last new arrival, she indicated my place, which was quite at the end of the long table. Olga was near the top. About twenty people sat on each side. At a sideboard the plump *bonne*, whose name was Uranie, poured out tea and coffee with wonderful celerity, serving everybody right and left.

There were two girl students copying—one was attempting a head by Luini; the other was working at the famous "Mona Lisa" by Leonardo da Vinci.

Mr Wills went towards their easels. Olga whispered: "The one who is copying the Luini has been engaged to him, the other one he is flirting with. He has a way about him that fascinates everybody. No-



body, I think, takes him seriously ; but we are all fond of him—except the one copying the Luini. I believe she really cares for Wills, so she has scenes, and scolds him, and is jealous. He is a sort of big Will-o'-the-Wisp in love affairs."

The Luini girl was very pretty, but she had a dissatisfied cross expression, and was evidently giving him a piece of her mind. She was tapping her little foot, and we could hear her agitated voice.

Mr Wills took her palette and brushes, making some corrections. Olga and I then wandered off. "He will forget all about us," said Olga.

The "Holy Family" by Sassoferrato gave me a good deal of trouble. Though a refined picture, it was not the style of work I cared for. Still I curbed my impatient temperament, and every day, for five weeks, painted from ten to four o'clock. Mr Wills came two or three times to the Louvre, and gave me valuable hints.

I thoroughly enjoyed my life. In the evenings I constantly went to Le Théâtre Français, and saw the perfection of acting by such artistes as Bressant, Reichemberg, Coquelin, Mounet Sulley, Sarah Bernhardt, etc.

When I looked back at the dull life I spent at the vicarage, I could hardly realise that I was the same girl. Never again under any circumstances would I accept a post as teacher in England : "*Vive la liberté ! Vive les artistes ! Vive le Bohème !*" was the cry of my heart. I could not act a part. To succeed in England in a dependent position it is necessary to have no personality, no originality. A governess is certain to be sat



upon (as the phrase goes) by some member of the family—especially by the women—for, as a rule, they are extremely conventional.

The pastel copy was a success. I received a cheque for twenty-five guineas, and got two more orders—one for a copy of "The Infanta" by Velasquez, and the second for a pastel copy of Rosalba. The day I received this cheque was an epoch in my life, I felt so independent.

So I had a prospect of earning about sixty guineas ! I considered this a fortune.

I gave a few lessons to the young and very charming little daughter of La Baronne Alphonse de Rothschild. Her name was Bettina. She was a sweet, graceful little girl, with a winning manner. Alas, she died in early womanhood, after but a brief space of happy married life.

The Baronne Alphonse was one of the most lovely women I have ever seen. She is generous, charming, and sympathetic.

## ARTISTIC LIFE IN FONTAINEBLEAU

HALLAM TENNYSON (THE PRESENT LORD  
TENNYSON)

I WAS leading a happy, unconventional existence. Olga, Mr Wills, and I often dined at funny little restaurants in the Quartier Latin. We met there queer Bohemian artists and *rapins*, shabbily attired, smoking clay pipes, full of animal spirits and fun—laughing, singing, and talking art. Mr Wills was a favourite, though he spoke such execrable French ; but he was *un bon enfant*, as they called him. Olga was the queen of Bohemia. She had plenty of money, and was thus able to buy the sketches of students who were badly off. She gave little suppers, and helped the very poor artists.

It was now August. Paris was really too hot, so Olga and I determined to spend a month at Fontainebleau, and board with the family of a painter.

### FONTAINEBLEAU—HALLAM TENNYSON

Oh, those happy days in the forest ! It was two hours by rail from Paris. Even the journey there was full of interest. Opposite to me sat a *religieuse* all in black, with a light linen band round her forehead, and a stiff

square collar in front. At her side hung a chaplet and crucifix. She had a fine face, pale and thin, and dark, luminous eyes, with an expression of seeing beyond in them. She reminded me of a nun by Philippe de Champagne at the Louvre. Next to her sat an elderly man, her father. I talked to the *religieuse*. She told me she was going to spend a few weeks with her father at Fontainebleau to recruit her strength.

As we approached Fontainebleau the clouds were pink and blue, relieved here and there with touches of gold on a background of pale green. The landscape smiled beneath these *couleurs-de-rose* effects; the fine old trees were decked in pompadour hues.

When we got an omnibus there were soldiers smelling of garlic, a fat peasant woman holding a basket of eggs, also a *curé*, with a red nose and a generally well-padded appearance. We rattled through the streets, which were white and dusty, but we got peeps of the fine old forest on all sides. At last the omnibus stopped in front of Monsieur Joulain's house, and out started the whole family to greet us. There was stumpy and red-faced monsieur, in a white blouse, covered with paint; there was madame, fat, fair, and forty; and there were nine olive branches. They all talked at the top of their voices. We were ushered into the *salle-à-manger*; the *soupe* was on the table; two big dogs barked violently, a parrot shrieked out "*Bon jour*," the children laughed, Monsieur Joulain roared—the row was terrible. Looking round I saw a long snake making his way up to me. Then Olga screamed, and the pet reptile was driven away. Monsieur now stood in front of the tureen—in went

a huge ladle, and out came smoking broth with large slices of bread floating in it. This was followed by *pot au feu*, melon, and salad. Monsieur left the room several times with slices of meat in his hand, and rushed into the garden to feed the dogs, birds, and reptiles. He was an impulsive, irate, noisy little man, always shouting ; he had no repose ; legs, arms, eyes, ears, nose were always moving.

The next morning we visited Monsieur Joulain's *atelier*. He was singing the "Marseillaise" when we entered. He showed us his pictures and sketches, but there was no charm about them ; they had no atmosphere ; in fact, no *feu sacré*. Monsieur Joulain abused English art to me.

"There is no real art, no love for it in your *Sacre Pays* ! It is a vast manufactory of pictures ; big prices are paid for names. Dealers are vultures filling their own pockets. *Voilà tout* ! They buy pictures as they would furniture. When I send pictures to your terrible England I do not sell, simply because *Joulain* is not the fashion. You English are snobs ; money is your God ! You worship the golden calf. And what daubs at your London exhibitions ! Those Royal Academicians, they are often the worst painters, and they have a right to exhibit eight daubs ! Too bad ! They live in big houses, not like our great French painters. Look at Jean François Millet ! He was a neighbour of mine at Barbizon ; he had no servants ; his wife went to market, with a big basket on her arm ; he dressed like a peasant, in a blue cotton blouse and wooden *sabots*. Your fashionable English so-called artist, who looks as if he stepped out of a band-box,

makes me sick—a great deal of show and no art. *Mon Dieu !* ” The little man threw up his arms and grew more and more irate, till he looked like a wind-mill.

At Fontainebleau we made the acquaintance of Pasteur B. and his family. It was at their house that I met Hallam Tennyson, the eldest son of the poet, who had gone there in order to improve his French. He was a fine, tall, young man, with a certain charm of manner ; his talk was varied and agreeable. He often spoke to me with pride and affection of his illustrious father, also of his sweet mother ; he was quite devoted to them. They were then travelling in France and Switzerland.

I remember a delightful picnic in the forest. We started in four *char-à-bancs*, a dozen hampers were stowed under the seats. It was a lovely day ; there was a joyfulness in the air, as if men, beasts, and birds were happy in the mere sense of being alive.

The forest was in all its glory. There were the grand old trees—tall, upright, proud-looking, some of them over a thousand years old, and bearing the names of kings ; their foliage was just getting tinted with rich golden hues. On all sides we perceived enormous massive rocks, and gigantic blocks of stone all sorts of shapes. The *char-à-bancs* drove swiftly through the woods. The perfume of the pines was intoxicating, the colouring as we got into the forest was gorgeous. One revelled in the deep, blue-grey of the rocks, the rich, purple heather, the soft, velvety, green moss and turf, the delicate ferns, the bluebells, and the exquisite abundance of wild flowers ; little squirrels rushed



swiftly by; the dry leaves emitted a delicious scent. We alighted in a lovely spot—a large expanse of soft, green turf bordered with sweet-smelling heather, and rocks and boulders on all sides. The cloth was laid at the foot of an antique oak, whose trunk was enveloped in a garment of green velvety moss.

Hallam Tennyson and I strolled about. He was a charming companion, not talking too much; when he did talk he said things worth hearing; now and then he recited bits of poetry from his favourite authors.

As we approached La Gorge Aux Fées we heard our names called out. The echoes repeated the sound, the splendid forest vibrated with our names—everybody had begun to feed. After the feast, songs were sung.

Hallam Tennyson told me how extremely sensitive his father was; that adverse criticism pained him to such an extent, that if any unfavourable notice appeared in the most obscure county paper, his family carefully hid it from him. Two or three times they omitted to do so; the result was that they found the poet in tears—the reading of what he considered harsh, unfair remarks on his poems completely upset him.

Hallam's mother was a very sweet woman, a great invalid. When he was at Fontainebleau the poet, Mrs Tennyson, and their other son were travelling in France. She wrote continually to Hallam. Sometimes he read extracts from her letters to me; they were truly delightful.

Hallam often used to remark how unlike Browning was to his own father in his mode of life. He



would never be surprised if Mr Browning expired in a white choker at a dinner party, but Tennyson had a horror of anything in the shape of society gatherings. Browning loved society, but then he made humanity a special study; Tennyson lived in the realms of imagination.

Now I return to my *mouton*, i.e., the picnic. The scene was picturesque; the men of the party were lying on their backs smoking, the ladies grouped about in nonchalant attitudes. The children were asleep, the dogs were lying down, darkness was creeping on, the birds were roosting, the insects quietly humming.

Some rode back in *char-à-bancs*. Hallam Tennyson, myself and a few others preferred to walk through the grand forest. The moonlight was splendid—a perfect Midsummer Night's Dream. There was a serene yellow moon, diffusing a brilliant and at the same time a soft light, bathing the trees in silver. We climbed hillocks, we descended into caverns. I expected to meet Titania, Puck and elves dancing.

One morning Olga and I, accompanied by Monsieur Joulain, set off for Barbizon, where we intended to stay for a few days for sketching purposes. Joulain was then in better temper, for he had sold a picture.

As we walked through the forest we met several artists. One, a tall powerful man, all in velveteen, was carrying on his back a large canvas, on which was begun a sketch of trees and rocks; behind him an old peasant carried his easel, box and stool, followed by a dog. He nodded to Mr Joulain, and rapidly dis-

appeared amongst the trees. We asked who the painter was.

"Dubois. He is a landscape artist of repute, but an original! He has a horror and terror of women; he will never go near them, and will never visit any place where he is likely to meet your sex. I expect he was jilted in his youth, and is afraid of falling in love again."

Three extraordinary-looking men approached us; one was attired in a sort of sackcloth garment, with sandals on his feet, and on his head he wore a large, round hat made of dried leaves and herbs. The other wore a suit of brown canvas and a pointed hat, and was smoking a clay pipe. The third was in shirt sleeves, blue cotton knickerbockers, scarlet stockings, and on his shaggy pate was a gaudy crimson and gold smoking-cap.

"We call them '*Les trois Mousquetaires*,'" exclaimed Monsieur Joulain, "they are inseparable."

"So glad to see you," they shouted, and as we came near they kissed Monsieur Joulain on both cheeks. They insisted on our coming to the inn where they were staying, and having dinner with them. We entered the inn, or rather *café restaurant*, a picturesque yellow house with green blinds, and covered with creepers, and in the midst of a large wild garden; roses, wall-flowers, vegetables and fruit grew in wild luxuriance. We went upstairs and visited the studios of the three wild Bohemian painters.

We first went to see the pictures of the man in sackcloth. Lying about everywhere were a number of

delicious landscapes, generally twilight and moonlight effects—grey, misty, ethereal, full of poetry and feeling.

“No one believed in me two years ago,” he remarked, when we enthusiastically praised his works. “The Emperor bought a picture of mine. Wolf, the popular art critic, gave me half a column in *Le Figaro*; now I happen to be the fashion, and can get any price I like for my works.”

The man in knickerbockers ushered me into his den. This large room was filled with bottles, pipes, stuffed birds, skins of animals, lay figures, busts, draperies, a skeleton which grimly rattled, odds and ends of queer *bric-à-brac*, and old furniture thickly covered with dust.

“I have just sold a picture to a wealthy Englishman,” he exclaimed, slapping his sides. “The first bit of luck, so let us have a good meal. *La Mère Blanc*,” he shouted to the landlady, “I can pay this evening, which is not often the case.”

*La Mère Blanc*, a nice, red-cheeked elderly woman, in a white cap and blue apron, smiled a knowing smile and tripped down to the kitchen.

“Brown Canvas’s” picture represented a black landscape, leaden sky, details hard and laboured, and a modern old man tottering under a huge faggot as he returns home. There was no atmosphere; but “Brown Canvas” was very pleased with himself for all that! He hardly ever sells a picture, but he does not care; his friends lend him money, he shares their luck, and that suffices him.

A number of milder Bohemians poured into the

small *restaurant*. Their costumes were varied. One man had no shoes, another no coat, a third a large paper hat. "Vive la Republic," they shouted, and called out, "La soupe, Mère Blanc."

We rushed downstairs into the garden, where the repast was served under a big shed. There was a long, green, wooden table devoid of table-cloth, with benches all round; on the walls of the shed were various caricatures drawn cleverly in black chalk. Everybody was terribly hungry, the food quickly disappeared, the wine circulated freely, healths were drunk, jokes were made, bad puns perpetrated—everybody was merry, coffee and pipes were brought in, songs were sung loud and cheerily. One man sat down at the piano, a horribly-cracked instrument, and we all danced—everybody waltzed, everybody was spinning round and round, and up and down.

The clock struck ten, a vehicle was ordered, and we were soon whirling quickly through the dark mysterious forest. It was with much regret that we bade good-bye to dear, delightful Fontainebleau and Barbizon.

Hallam told me that he loved reading Seneca, "a calm, majestic man, who seemed to have entirely what the world wants now—the highest peace. It is all hurry-scurry, everyone knocking over his neighbour in order to try to shove himself to the front and thrust in his own little opinion, which probably is worth nothing."

I had a note from Hallam when he returned to England, in which he says,—

"It was delicious to come back to our calm moun-

tain top, and to see the great golden moon rise over our immeasurable plains (the Weald of Sussex, which I told you we overlooked), and to see the cloud shadows chase one another, as I have often watched them do before."

At a winter exhibition of old masters at Burlington House I was much struck by his father's striking—almost weird—appearance. He wore a soft felt wide-awake, his hair was still rather long, a loose cloak hung about his shoulders; he looked decidedly picturesque. He is the only poet I have seen who looked a poet, and I have met a good many. Browning looked like a shrewd man of business; Coventry Patmore a rather stern, dogmatic conservative country squire; Allingham and Aubrey de Vere, though charming, had not the poetical note; they had none of the wild-frenzy appearance that Tennyson had.

That afternoon Hallam, who shook hands with me, offered to introduce me to his illustrious father, but a sudden fit of shyness came over me, and in a tone of alarm, I cried, "Oh! please don't," and disappeared. This evidently amused the poet. I dare-say nobody had ever before refused to be introduced to the great Poet Laureate!



## MORE ABOUT W. G. WILLS.

BEFORE returning to London, where I intended setting up as a professional portrait painter, Olga and I went to spend a few weeks at Etretat, in Normandy. Mr W. G. Wills was staying there, and a few other friends as well.

The first person we saw at Etretat was Mr Wills. He was sauntering down the beach, wearing an extremely heavy shabby greatcoat, though the weather was boiling hot. On his head was a battered straw helmet, on his bare feet were sandals. He was carrying a canvas and a painting box, followed by a young girl, holding a sketch book.

We all dined at the same *table d'hôte* at L'Hotel B. Then Mr Wills generally wore a waistcoat, and had his face washed, at all events, on one side—but too often forgetting the fact that he had two cheeks—and sometimes he had on a paper collar. He was fond of airing his French, which was uncommonly grotesque, and his accent terrible. The first morning after our arrival at Etretat, we had our *café au lait*, indeed we had all our meals, at the Hotel B. We were greeted by a red-cheeked *bonne*, wearing a white frilled cap. She poured out coffee with marvellous rapidity, served everybody right and left, darting from one to another with a quickness of step delightful to witness—she was a second



Uranie, in fact. While serving she had a funny little repartee always ready. She was evidently a favourite of Mr Wills.

His genial *bon jour* (pronounced Bonme) resounded through the *salle-à-manger*.

"*Donne moi coffee ben chau.*"

Olga and I could not help laughing, his accent was so funny.

"You must not laugh at my French, for I am proud of it; the *bonne* understands me well. *Moi aime beaucoup ca, mercy.*"

"I want you to pose for me" (addressing me this time). "You have such good colour. You have *beauté du diable*. You will do for Hebé."

Many people smiled. I was annoyed, so I whispered to Mr Wills not to make personal remarks *pro bono publico*.

"*Ah, mes amis,*" continued Mr Wills, addressing the people in his funny French, "*moi suis artiste, il faut pardonner mes libertés.*"

Mr Wills kindly gave me pastel lessons in an old barn. We got a young girl to pose for the head and hands. He came every day, often spending a couple of hours teaching and talking. Under his wing I really made progress in that delightful medium, pastels—an old art revived.

Though not by any means a good artist, Mr Wills was in painting, as in his literary work, a poet. He had fancy, and if he had had art training in his youth, he would have been a fine painter. He took to art only in middle life, and had not sufficient knowledge of technique; but some of his pastels were charming, and

he had for a time much success. When Mr Wills was not painting or flirting, he was writing his play for Henry Irving. He enjoyed painting beyond everything else in the world, regretting that having to earn money not only for himself, but for his old mother, to whom he was warmly attached, he must write plays to keep the pot boiling.

Those amusing Etretat days were as bright and exhilarating as champagne! We used to bathe daily in the sea. Olga had an admirer, who was really like a fish. We met him constantly in our aquatic expeditions. He was short, bandy-legged, with round, light eyes, pink lids, a red nose, and a huge mouth, which almost reached from ear to ear. He looked so hideous in the sea, or rather when he stepped out of it, that she refused his offer of marriage with scorn. He pursued her once far out in the sea, shouting that she had broken his life. Just then a big wave tossed them both on the beach, and he rolled like a porpoise at her feet. But she laughed so much at him, that the next day he left Etretat in great indignation, and sent her a note, in which he called her a heartless coquette.

Olga looked, if possible, more captivating in her bathing dress than in her everyday garments: it was a picturesque navy blue, embroidered with white; her hair was braided, her feet in straw sandals. Mr W. G. Wills wore his old straw helmet, and looked like an ancient Briton. I never saw so many bare limbs, brown legs, red legs, thick and thin legs, such grotesque figures. There were indescribably lively scenes, for the sea was thickly peopled with merry bathers. A stout, middle-aged Frenchman was having swim-

ming lessons from his old sister. He would turn over like a seal, and gasp for breath, while she patted his back, calling out "*Courage, courage, mon petit chou*" (my little cabbage was at least forty-five). His bathing dress was a pale green, with bright yellow patches. He often stood proudly on the beach after he had been swimming a few paces, looking absurd and yet quite unconscious. Certainly the French have not such a keen sense of the ridiculous as the English.

Mr Wills sometimes had a swim by moonlight; he liked to create a sensation by doing eccentric things.

There were two pretty girls at Etretat who volunteered to be his secretaries, writing to his dictation. The one who was with him in the day time he called "*Le Soleil*"; the other, "*La Lune*," was the evening secretary. Mr Wills, though so fond of women, never married. He hated the idea of being tied down to any one; but he proposed to several girls, and was even engaged for a few months to one or two. But he never took the final leap. He loved too much the shabby coat, the slippers, the dusty studio. In all my life I never saw such a hugger-mugger place as his big studio was; often there was not a decent chair to sit on; all was disorder and cobwebs. "*Vive le Bohème!*" was his cry. A conventional existence would have killed him; the free artistic life suited his temperament. He was a kind of Oliver Goldsmith; his room constantly filled with young and old, with needy Bohemians, and failures who, indeed, sponged upon him. He kept his gold

under a bust, or in an odd corner of his studio, and wondered why it disappeared so quickly! His queer acquaintances came to drink his whisky, smoke his tobacco, and borrow his money. When invited to tea often there were no cups and saucers, and we had to drink out of jugs or tumblers. Yet Mr Wills was happy, for painting was his religion, his life. He was his own enemy ; his life grew more and more undisciplined. The genial, kindly Mr Wills died in a London hospital.

This was the sad end of a kindly man of genius, the real King of Bohemia.

## L'ATELIER CHAPLAIN

MONSIEUR CHAPLAIN was at that period a popular painter ; his pictures generally represented pretty, graceful women, and girls in fanciful dresses. The Empress Eugenie admired his works, so he was *à la mode*. He had two *ateliers* for ladies ; the pupils who worked in a studio adjoining his own paid much higher fees. It was attended largely by young and fashionable women ; but the *atelier* where I worked was intended for the poorer, and, consequently, the more serious pupils, who meant to become professionals. Mr Chaplain visited the studio on an average twice or thrice a week.

We all worked from a nude female model ; some only drew the head and shoulders, the more advanced drew the whole figure. Mr Chaplain was an admirable teacher, but very severe ; he seldom left our *atelier* without having made some one wretched. The first time he appeared, he was so sarcastic over my neighbour's drawing—a poor, young Polish girl—that she burst out crying. When he came to my easel I was so nervous when he asked me if I had drawn much from the life that my tongue suddenly became like a piece of wood ; I could not speak. He remarked, after looking carefully at my work, that it was the attempt of a very nervous person, the outline was so shaky and

undecided. He sat down in front of every easel, followed by his dog, who, like his master, solemnly went to every student ; when he thought Mr Chaplain's remarks were too long he gave a sharp bark.

Mr Chaplain evidently took a personal interest in each and all of his *élèves* ; that was one of the chief causes why so many of his pupils became remarkable. In the *atelier* where I worked there were nearly twenty girls. When he was pleased his smile was delightful. Once he was so surprised at the progress I had made in the drawing and shading of a charcoal head and bust from the living model that he absolutely shook hands with me. I felt as if I was suddenly transported into some heavenly region, and was overcome with delight. But several times after that he blew me up for carelessness, stamping his feet and looking so angry that it had the desired effect of, at all events, making me think before I put a line on paper.

I remember an amusing incident which occurred in the *atelier* shortly before I returned to London. Amongst the *élèves* was a rich little Russian widow. She was a great favourite with us all ; she was so amiable, and generally brought us *bonbons* and cakes. Though her drawings were not correct, she had an original technique and personality. She preferred working in the *atelier* of the serious pupils. Among them was a very poor student, who looked as if she had not sufficient food, so the Russian widow kindly bought many of her sketches in order to help her.

One afternoon when Monsieur Chaplain was supposed not to be in Paris, the Russian widow announced



that she had ordered some delicacies, and that we were all to have a picnic in the *atelier*; the model was to join us in the impromptu repast. The cloth was spread on the floor, and the different *pâtés*, galantine and tarts, etc., were laid out. We were all seated round them, tailor fashion, when to our consternation entered Monsieur Chaplain's dog; he always preceded his master. Without a moment's hesitation the little widow swept off the cloth with all its contents into a far corner of the studio behind the screen, where the model dressed and undressed. The dog was excited: he had found a chicken; and when Monsieur Chaplain marched in he was walking round and round wagging his tail. Monsieur Chaplain looked puzzled—no easels, no drawings or paintings! What had happened?

We all shook with fear and trembling; as for me, having a keen sense of the ludicrous, I could not refrain from laughing. The poor student sobbed hysterically.

However, the little widow was equal to the occasion; being graceful and piquante, we all felt that she would get us out of the scrape, and so she did. She confessed that she had been longing to give us a treat, that this was her twenty-eighth birthday, and thinking that Monsieur Chaplain would not be visiting the studio, she had organised this picnic. Then, noticing his smile, she begged of him to drink to her health in a glass of champagne.

He was most amiable, and remained just long enough to eat some sandwiches, propose a toast, and make a speech full of flattering allusions to our graceful little hostess.

During the three months I was there I made decided

progress in my drawing, so much so that Chaplain regretted greatly my leaving when, as he said, I was beginning to understand and feel my way ; but unfortunately I had to return to London—I was wanted at home.

## UNA HAWTHORNE

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE's daughter Una, with her glorious amber hair, deep-set, thoughtful, tender, grey-blue eyes, sensitive features, at times so strangely silent and abstracted, her flashes of quaint humour, struck me as the living embodiment of her illustrious father's heroines—her short history, so pathetic and tragic, would have suited his romantic, weird genius. I never met a young woman so suggestive of mystery ; her silence at times was so impenetrable. She was like a sphinx, with a far-away look in her magnificent eyes, shadowed by thick eyebrows and lashes ; her mouth, though large, was full of character ; when she smiled a sudden sunshine illuminated the whole face ; when she laughed one heard a joyous rippling, tinkling sound. Then she would relapse into strange aloofness ; she neither saw nor heard what was going on around her—her outer form was present, but the inner woman was far away. A terrible love disappointment caused her to lose her reason. She was found in the porch of a church raving mad, barefooted, with her splendid hair falling about her shoulders ; her eyes were wild, flowers were in her hand ; she was a living modern Ophelia. She was for a time sheltered and taken care of by some Anglican Sisters, and from thence removed to a

private lunatic asylum. After some time she recovered her reason; she called at our house in Kensington one day when I happened to be alone. Her mysterious beauty, her wild melancholy eyes, impressed me then greatly. I longed to put on canvas a record of her strange weird personality, so pregnant with tragic romance. Her silence alarmed me; for there she sat in our drawing-room, her hands clasped tightly, looking out into space, with eyes, that though wide open, did not see anything. She suddenly removed her hat, and perceiving some violets in a vase, took them, got up, looked at herself in the glass, then fixed the flowers in the masses of her copper-coloured hair, while staring at her image with that strange far-away look. There was no sound, except the ticking of the clock; she slowly went towards a looking-glass, unfastened her dress, displaying a throat and neck like white Carrara marble. Then turning round I shall never forget her extraordinary smile, or the muffled tone in which she cried out, "Am I not beautiful!" She threw herself on the sofa, exclaiming, "I shall be loved still, that I know."

I was alarmed, evidently her reason was not entirely recovered. For a year we lost sight of Una. She went to America, and then we heard that she was engaged to be married to a young man who had fallen desperately in love with her; but, as his health was delicate, he had gone on a sea voyage previous to their marriage. Una came to London. The wedding was to take place from her brother Julian's house in Twickenham. My sister was to be

one of her bridesmaids. Una was at last happy. She was busy ordering her *trousseau*, even the wedding dress was being made, when the terrible news reached her that her *fiancé* had died at sea ; his last words, so the captain wrote, was “Dear Una !”

This was the finishing stroke ; this second tragedy killed Una Hawthorne. She collapsed entirely, and went to reside at the Sisters’ home at Clewer, near Windsor. Her beautiful hair turned grey, her fine-skinned face became wizened ; life had no more light, no more happiness in store for her. She died in the prime of life.

But she remains in the minds and hearts of those who knew, and could appreciate, the exquisite purity of her soul, her tender affection, her unselfishness. She makes one think of those two lines of the French poet, Malesherbes :—

“ Et Rose, elle a vécu, ce que vivent les roses,  
L’espace d’un Matin ! ”

## THE SLADE SCHOOL

SIR EDWARD POYNTER AND ALPHONSE LEGROS

THOUGH I had considerable aptitude for art, my lack of perseverance in the dull routine of drawing was one of the reasons I did not get on as well as I ought to have done. I recollect that when I was a little girl I was fond of tapestry work, and embroidered no end of slippers, but I never did two alike, because I got so weary of doing the same pattern twice over ; the result being that I had to present my slippers to men with wooden legs or with only one foot. I had the same tendency in art studies—I absolutely hated monotony. I was (and still am) impulsive and impressionistic, and had great difficulty in curbing this impatient disposition.

Sir Edward (then Mr) Poynter was Art Director at the Slade School the first year I was a pupil there. He was a man of great learning, with fine aspirations—almost too high for a teacher. Michael Angelo was his ideal ; he wished the students to try and be Michael Angelos—an impossible dream ! The result was a general disappointment, as the students remarked, making a pun on his name.

Edward Poynter is a most sincere and hard-working man ; he knows his art *au fond*, but there is lack of



*brio* and go in his work, and his colouring is often heavy and rather muddy. But as President of the Royal Academy, he is the right man in the right place, and much more in his element than he was as Slade Professor—there he rather depressed the students. He is a man to be thoroughly respected, but he is perhaps over-conscientious. If he and Sargent were rolled into one, then something really great in art might be produced. There is a lot of dash and brilliancy in Sargent's work—as the vulgar saying is, “it knocks one in the eye.” Poynter is the exact contrast in his work; he wants spirit, and *de se laisser aller*, as the French say.

There were several good students at the Slade School, who since have become well known. Amongst them Messrs Tuke, John Collier, Jacomb Hood, Huxley's very clever daughter, who died shortly after her marriage, Dorothy Tennant (now Lady H. Stanley) and Emily Ford.

Monsieur Alphonse Legros succeeded Poynter as the Slade Art Professor in University School. Like most Frenchmen he was satisfied with his own language, and could not, or would not, speak English. He generally made queer sounds as he approached the easels, expressing either approbation or the contrary, and gesticulating a great deal; there was no doubt a deal of expression in his shoulders. He was imbued with the severe spirit of the old masters, and used to wax sarcastic about modern art, and the Royal Academy especially. His method of teaching was to work before the students, drawing and painting a head from the living model in one hour, timed by his watch, which

lay before him. Then he would stop, and we examined his work; we were then expected to go and paint likewise. The result, as a rule, was disastrous, all being bad imitators—"little Legros." His beginnings were often grand, but he never taught us how to proceed with the second painting. I recollect an art student telling me that Legros' first sketch of the great writer Carlyle was splendid, but that after the first hour he literally spoiled it, and that the portrait ended by resembling a man with water on the brain.

Legros sometimes painted portraits of celebrities before the Slade School class. He thoroughly enjoyed this feat; he then felt like Napoleon, in the field of the battle of art. His palette was set, the brushes ready, the canvas slightly stained either with raw sienna or umber, the watch before him, and the sitter placed on the platform, generally feeling uncomfortable, as the large class of youths and maidens were staring at the unfortunate victim while he was being executed.

There was a great want of variety in the studies. An eternal brown-skinned Italian model, with a girdle round his loins, stood for hours daily on a platform, with no picturesque background or draperies—certainly not an inspiring study. This was varied by drawing from the antique, and now and then there was a composition class, the subject generally classic. It was all cold and academical. The assistant master was a pundit in bones; his notion of art was the thorough knowledge of anatomy and muscles; he frequently carried a skeleton which often rattled ominously in

his arms. Some students declared it was the skeleton of a lady-love who had died when he was young. Brown-skinned male models, skeletons, and the antique for ever and ever are not conducive to high spirits ; art aspirants wants to be in an atmosphere of beauty and colour, and to be directed by a genial enthusiast who shows them how to see and what to look at, for so many have eyes and see not.

Neither in Poynter's or Legros' art was there any sense of the enjoyment of beauty, which after all is the *raison d'être* of art ; it ought to give the beholder pleasure. These two accomplished men tried to imitate past masters, perhaps the English climate accounts much for the dulness of many of the present paintings ; the darkness, the damp fogs which penetrate into the marrow of one's bones do not exhilarate or imbue one with that *joie de vivre* which helps to give brilliancy and life to art, creating brightness and scintillations of light, affecting colour. The present Spanish School with their late great master, Fortuni, does inspire the feeling of joy, of light, of life, while the English artists' works are too frequently leathery, dull, without atmosphere. Of course there are many exceptions, but I think the art teaching in London is largely responsible for the prevailing lack of life and *brio* in the paintings. I, like many others, got very weary of constantly drawing the human male form in every conceivable position, and ended by loathing bones and muscles. I had anatomical plates on the brain : when I met my acquaintance and friends, I stripped them mentally of their skins, they all reminded me of that figure in Milan Cathedral who carries his flesh on

his *écorché* arm. These nightmares were the result of not *toujours perdix* but *toujours anatomie* !

The grand and severe school of painting has had its day. Those great old masters are for ever gone ; it is of no use trying to imitate them. But the *plein air* school has now its fine exponents, especially abroad. There are wonderful effects of light to be studied out of doors—scintillations and quiverings of the sun on trees, fields, water, flowers—the ever-varying clouds, the exquisite shadows, modulations, harmonies and delicious tenderness of dear old Mother Nature ; the grace and beauty of womanhood, the infinite charm of childhood, especially when seen in the open-air ; the dignity and pathos of the animal world. There is all this wealth of beauty to turn to, but the learned and enthusiastic lover of Nature can alone direct these studies.

## THE LATE PROFESSOR W. K. CLIFFORD

WHEN I was a student at the Slade School, Monsieur Legros asked me as a favour to try and get Professor Clifford to pose for a portrait to be performed in an hour in the Slade School before the students. I called on the Cliffords in Colville Road, Bayswater, persuaded the brilliant young professor to consent, and brought him to be executed by Legros.

It must have been an ordeal, for, alas! Professor Clifford was in a most delicate state of health and looked ill. He sat on a chair on the platform in the centre of the room where we generally drew from the living model. Monsieur Legros took his place in front of his easel. The canvas had been stained a kind of umber tint; the big palette prepared with lumps of colour; the students (young men and young women) formed a semicircle at the back, so as to see Professor Legros's method of work.

"*Comme il à l'air souffrant!*" remarked Monsieur Legros to me *sotto voce*.

And then he set to work with his accustomed energy. He got a kind of likeness, but the spirit and the grand intelligence were lacking. It was a picture of a seedy, broken-down, cadaverous man, and before the hour was expired Legros stopped. He said that Professor Clifford looked exhausted (which he did) but

I am sure that Legros knew the portrait was not a success. When the picture was exhibited at the Grosvenor Gallery, people condoled with Mrs W. K. Clifford on the failure of this oil sketch.

Professor W. K. Clifford was much beloved. I remember someone saying to him once that everybody loved him, and he, being rather embarrassed, laughed it off with, "Oh, no! Nobody does that—perhaps dogs, children and military men like me a little, but that is all."

Children adored him, and a rumour that he was in the house of a friend who had children instantly produced signs of the little ones. He was a wonderful conjurer; he could spin plates marvellously, five or six at a time, but he cared for nothing so much as gymnastics and athletic feats. He was very careless about his clothes, though they were always well cut and distinctive, but he liked wearing Norfolk jackets and old clothes, and a soft felt hat over his eyes. Once he was highly delighted at being taken for a tramp, and on another occasion, when he went down to dine at the Mint with Mr Chandler Roberts (now Sir William Roberts Austen), carrying his evening things in a bag, as he was to dress there, having gone on straight from the College, he was again delighted at being taken for the charwoman's husband. He had all sorts of delightful accomplishments that are not usually expected from brilliant mathematicians; for instance, he had a charming touch on the piano, though he did not play much, and a delightful, soft, baritone voice, but it was only now and then, and among intimate friends, that he would accompany himself and sing,



“Wait till you come to Forty Years,” to an old Cambridge setting of it, or one or two other songs of a similar description. He was a celebrated athlete, and to run a mile or so beside a carriage in the country always seemed to him infinitely preferable to driving in it.

## MR GEORGE BENTLEY

### PUBLISHER

CHARMING men are very rare. Amongst the few I have met I certainly place the late Mr George Bentley at the head of the poll.

As a rule publishers are not appreciated by authors, so it is pleasant to be able to praise the only publisher I have ever known well. Mr George Bentley was a gentleman of the old school—chivalrous, with courtly manners. He was tall and slight, with a most expressive face.

When I sent my first short story to *Temple Bar* I had no introduction ; did not even know then that Mr George Bentley was the editor. I wrote a little note to the editor asking him to read my MS. I had no answer for several months, so, taking it for granted that my paper did not suit, I wrote again to ask for my MS.

By return I received a letter signed "George Bentley," informing me that he accepted my story with pleasure, that he liked it much, and hoped I would continue to send contributions to *Temple Bar*. This epistle delighted me. It was my first literary effort, and, if I may use the expression, hot from the oven of a recent experience in France. When published

it attracted attention. Mr William Black was charmed. He strongly advised me to consider seriously whether I had not better go in for literature as a profession rather than for art. He had tried both in his youth, and had given up painting, as it is difficult to serve two masters.

Mr George Bentley advised me to write a novel, but I had neither the patience nor perseverance for a long continued effort—short stories suited my temperament.

When I first went to see Mr Bentley in his office in Burlington Street, I was so nervous at the prospect of meeting a real, live publisher, that I stumbled over his coal scuttle. I had pictured a stern, cold, business-like person, but he was a most amiable, polished gentleman; his manner soon put me quite at my ease. I had sent him a story which he did not altogether approve of, and he had suggested another ending. He told me that he hated anything that savoured of coarseness or immorality, that he endeavoured to keep up a high moral standard and tone in English literature, and he deplored much the loss of purity in the drama and fiction of late years. He spoke enthusiastically of the novels of Jane Austen, and placed them next to Shakespeare. He also praised some of Rhoda Broughton's works for their great freshness, reality and pathos. He evidently had a wide knowledge of literature, and was a fine critic. From that day to within a few months of his death, Mr Bentley was always considerate and helpful. When he did reject a MS. of mine, he invariably gave me a reason for doing so, and it pained him to say—*No*.

I recollect Mr Bentley saying to me, "What think you of the authors giving a dinner to ——" because he has sold more copies of his book this year than any other author has of his or hers? What will So-and-so say who advertises a thirty-ninth edition? I believe that if Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* were first to be published in 1895, and on the same day advertised say, *The Black Carrot*, so diseased is the public taste that the sale would run:—

Miss Austen, . . .	1,000.
<i>The Black Carrot</i> , . .	50,000.

And so the Authors' Society would entertain *The Black Carrot*, and leave the authoress of *Pride and Prejudice* to the appreciative attentions of Miss Henriette Corkran! Queer times! everything topsy-turvy. I am sorry for the loss of Stevenson. I only saw him once, when he breakfasted with me a few years back, and for two hours he delighted me. He was so wonderfully bright, and had such a pleasing smile. He came nearest to Walter Scott in the *Master of Ballantrae*—a fine work. There was about it, the same indefinable something, to fix it as a picture for ever, as there is in the romances of the great Abbotsford Magician."

I have read delightful articles by Mr Bentley in *Temple Bar*; the work of an accomplished gentleman in the true sense of that often misused word.

I once spent a very happy afternoon with him and his wife at their charming residence, Upton, near Slough. I recollect how Mr Bentley laughed when I

told him that I had mistaken a pretty workhouse in the neighbourhood for his house, and had literally inquired for him at the workhouse. I added that it was a most unlikely place to find publishers, but that the same could not be said as regards authors. We had tea in his lovely garden, filled with flowers and beehives. He was courteous and kindly to all—a refined, cultured gentleman of the good old English sort.

## WILLIAM BLACK

WHEN I first met Mr William Black he was on the staff of the *Daily News*. He had written some good novels—*In Silk Attire*, *Kilmeny*, etc., etc.—but it was *The Daughter of Heth* which made him famous.

One evening he came to our house in Kensington with his friend W. Barry. I related to them my impressions of Scotland. I had gone there straight from Paris, and the contrast between the Sundays north of the Tweed and those I spent in Edinburgh was very marked ; they were astonishingly different. I remarked how terrible those Scotch Sabbaths were ; how I had shocked the people by humming French tunes such as—

“ Malbruck s'en va t'en guerre ”  
Au clair de la lune,” etc.,

on a Sunday, and the dismay I caused in the household by drawing caricatures on the Sabbath of one of the elders of a church, who squinted, had a long, red nose, bandy legs, and always carried a black bag in a big hand, with ill-fitting woollen gloves.

Mr William Black laughed heartily at my Scotch experiences. Months later he informed me that many of my remarks had suggested the *Daughter of Heth*.



Some time later he discussed the title at our house. We put in a hat the names *Coquette* and *Daughter of Heth*. Mr Black drew out *Daughter of Heth*, so that decided the title.

This novel when it appeared was an immediate and tremendous success in England as well as in America. After this great hit Mr William Black gave up journalism.

In general society Mr Black was often silent and dreamy, but he could be whimsical, funny, and very jocular. When I first knew him I was an art student, and Mr Black was interested in my studies, for he had a real love of art. He told me that when he was a youth he had a yearning to become an artist, that he spoiled no end of canvases, and wasted many tubes of colour in his fruitless endeavours to paint ; but as it was necessary for him to earn his livelihood, he became a journalist, and tried his hand at poetry and novels. In one of his letters to me, he says that he had written "enough poetry to sink a ship."

I tried a pastel sketch of the *Daughter of Heth*. When I asked him what expression "Coquette" was to have he wrote :—"Her face is bright, melancholy, piquante, sad, and a dozen other things ; hair with certain entanglements, and may come over the forehead. Do it the size you like, but perhaps the same size as 'Arethusa' (a study I had given him), so that I may hang up two examples of a young master. I will send a man to carry off Arethusa, to run away with her, on Friday."

Mr Black had at times a whimsical way of expressing himself which was decidedly amusing.

I recollect discussing *Love or Marriage*, and finding fault with it.

"Is it necessary that a book should always be pretty? You are not expected to like *Helstone*; the book is written with a dark and moral purpose, and you must dislike all the people who ought to be disliked," he answered.

A girl friend of mine told him that she wanted to write a novel, but she could not find a plot.

"Oh," exclaimed Mr Black, "it need not have a plot, but as a rule novels have some characters, and be sure of putting in plenty of moonlight and poetical quotations from '*Manfred*.'"

The young lady was very puzzled, as he said it so seriously she never imagined he was chaffing her.

Mr Black was a small man, but his chest and shoulders were broad; his brown eyes shone through big gold-rimmed spectacles; he had a light-brown moustache. He reminded me of a pet cat of mine—I generally see likenesses to birds and animals in most people. He had a pleasant Scotch accent. At times he had the wild spirits of a schoolboy out on a holiday.

I recollect one afternoon he came to the National Gallery to see a copy I was doing of *Andrea del Sarto*. We had tea at a little restaurant, and went by the steamer to Chelsea. He insisted on making a pilgrimage to the house in Cheyne Row where Thomas Carlyle had lived for so many years. William Black took off his hat as we approached the house and knelt on his doorstep, as a token of his profound veneration for the great sage.

When my first story appeared in *Temple Bar* I received a letter full of the kindest appreciation from Mr Black. I never heard him utter an unkind or disparaging word about any of his literary *confrères*. He was extremely genial, and enjoyed giving luncheons and dinners to his many friends.

One summer afternoon I visited his married sister, Mrs Morten, who was then residing with her husband and children near Epsom. She invited me to stay to dinner, and she said she expected Mr Black to drop in, as he was visiting friends in the neighbourhood.

After we had had a talk Mrs Morten left the room. In her absence William Black was announced. He was in evening dress, and said that as he had to catch a train for Victoria he could only remain a short time. I spoke a few words to him, and he promised to come to see us on the following Saturday evening.

When the door closed two or three people burst out laughing.

"Mr William Black was not here at all," they exclaimed.

"Not here!" I exclaimed, "who on earth was it then? Has he a double exactly like him in face, figure, voice?"

"It was not Mr Black, but his sister, Mrs Morten," said a friend of theirs. "Is it not a wonderful make-up?"

It was indeed surprising.

By adding a false moustache, rolling up her hair in order to make it look short, wearing the spectacles, she created a perfect likeness.

"Yes," remarked Mrs Morten, who then returned ;

“my brother leaves his evening suit of clothes here, as he often dines with us ; they fit me exactly.”

After his second marriage Mr and Mrs William Black went to live in Brighton in a charming house in Paston Place. I saw hardly anything of him after he left London, but one afternoon, happening to be staying in Brighton for a few days, I called, and was charmed with the house. It was filled with pictures and sketches by his many artist friends—brothers of the brush such as the late genial, kindly John Pettie, R.A., Colin Hunter, A.R.A., Peter Graham, Parsons, Fred Walker, etc. William Black was a special favourite with painters ; he enjoyed their free, unconventional life. Fishing was such a favourite recreation of his that he often rushed North to enjoy the sport.

That afternoon the lovely actress, Mary Anderson, was spending the day there, and everybody was in high spirits. She was a great favourite. There were jokes and games, the pretty Mary flipping stamps up in the air ; when they stuck to the ceiling there were roars of laughter.

This was the last time I ever saw the genial, kindly author, the creator of a gallery of charming girl heroines. He never wrote or uttered coarse words ; his novels, to use Mathew Arnold's favourite phrase, are full of sweetness, and light, and romance.

We made a little exchange ; he gave me some of his novels, and I painted for him the head of a girl, which we baptized “The Beauty of the Isle of Wight.”

The following note refers to it :—

" REFORM CLUB.

"I must tell you how lovely your portrait of the Beauty of the Isle of Wight looks, now that an ingenious carver and gilder, having kept it for a couple of months, has sent it home. Beauty, when unadorned, you know, is very pretty, but your friend, being now enveloped in elaborate curves and squares of florid gilding, and even enclosed in glass as well, shines down upon every visitor, and takes everybody captive.

"One artist friend of mine, who has just returned from Brittany, says he is going down to the Isle of Wight, and if this Perseus can find any such Andromeda perched on any rock, you may depend on it no monster, in the shape of a rich old man, will have the chance of carrying her off. I drink her health every morning at half-past one in a creamy glass of champagne, and sometimes I think—it may be the effect of the liquor—I think she winks! If she would only come down from the wall and share my supper, goodness knows how welcome she would be. Didn't the Commandant bow and respond to Don Juan's invitation? Why, therefore, shouldn't she wink? Perhaps she doesn't like champagne. I will try her with a glass of sherry flavoured with *eau de Cologne*.

"Again, *Ich gebe Ihnen meiner besten Dank dafur*, and hope you will always be able to charm all beholders with such bewitching portraits.—Very faithfully yours,

" WILLIAM BLACK."

## THE ROYAL ACADEMY

### OUTSIDERS' DAY

SEVERAL friends, amongst others W. G. Wills, Dr Westland Marston, and William Black, were at our house on the never-to-be-forgotten evening when I received my *first* ticket of admission to "inspect my works" at the Royal Academy. They all gave me a big hurrah, and we drank some excellent punch, made by my father to celebrate this event.

I built no end of castles in the air while gazing at this little ticket, which, though it looked insignificant, meant so much to me in my career as an artist.

Early next morning I wended my way to Burlington House. As I approached the formidable gates I met a gang of shabbily-dressed men and women carrying paint boxes, etc. They were, like myself, the lucky ones whose works were hung on the walls of the Royal Academy. On a table in the hall sheets of paper were laid out, with the names of the exhibitors, alphabetically arranged.

"You can never be certain that your work is really placed unless you see your name there," exclaimed a depressed-looking young man with long hair and a battered wide-awake. "The Hanging Committee at



the last moment take down a picture and replace it, probably to hang a friend's or a relation's work. This shabby trick has been played on me twice ; however, this time I am all right."

With a certain amount of nervousness I approached the table surrounded by an eager crowd of artists. One lady had tears in her eyes ; her name was not there, though she had received her ticket.

"Cruelly thoughtless !" she exclaimed ; "better to be kicked out outright."

But my name was there, printed in black and white. I handed my ticket to an attendant, got a regular exhibitor's ticket, and mounted the stairs leading to the galleries.

The rooms were filling ; but how unattractive the galleries looked ! Most of the pictures on the line were covered with linen to protect them from the dust. Carpenters carrying ladders were strutting about, boards were laid out on trestles, on which were basins sponges, palettes, brushes, bottles of oil and varnish.

Several men and women artists were putting finishing touches to their pictures, some perched on ladders, others on stools, a few on their knees, or even sitting on the floor, according to the position of their respective works. The majority looked discontented ; some few were pleased, and clutched hold of their acquaintances in order to carry them off to see how well they had been treated.

Though my picture was skyed, I was so glad to have my name on the Royal Academy catalogue that I was satisfied. The Five Hangers, so called because they select the pictures to be hung amongst the

thousands and thousands of "doubtful pictures"; an arduous and ungrateful task, for they rarely please the artist, and often make enemies. The pictures that are utterly rejected have the mark of an "X" in white or red chalk—these at once go into the cellars; but those marked with a "D" are again examined, and then is the opportunity for a friendly hanger to render a service.

Pictures that have undoubted merit are accepted, but the number of these is very limited; the majority of works are mediocre or very bad. From twelve to twenty-five thousand pictures are sent up to the Royal Academy; they have to be judged in a week. The very good or the abominable productions can be judged at a glance. But there are often delicate, refined, unobtrusive works that cannot possibly be judged so rapidly. It would be far wiser if the rule was made absolute that only two works by every artist (except the Academicians) should be sent in to the Royal Academy: now eight can be forwarded. Though this has been suggested and talked about for years no change has been made; but, as Laboulaye once said, "It takes a hundred years to get a new idea in an Englishman's head." The Royal Academy's conservative ways in some respects justify that Frenchman's remark.

Everybody and everything looked seedy on the outsiders' day, with the exception of Sir Frederick Leighton, who walked through the galleries, looking like a monarch amongst his subjects, smiling, shaking hands with those he knew, his high-pitched voice resounding through the rooms.

That afternoon an amusing incident occurred. A titled lady sent up her card to Sir Frederick Leighton. On it she had written in pencil that she must see him at once. As she was an acquaintance of his, Sir Frederick went down into the hall to speak to her. I happened to be on the stairs, and saw the lady, with a footman in livery carrying a picture. The attendants had told her that it was too late : the works were hung and nothing could be received—it was against the orders ; but the lady (who reminded me of that episode, told in the Bible, of an importunate widow who woke up the judge in the night) declared she would not stir till she had spoken to the President of the Royal Academy. In order to get rid of this lady, Sir Frederick went downstairs, and there a comical scene ensued.

The lady exclaimed, “ Oh, Sir Frederick, the porter would not let me go upstairs ; but I have brought the picture, just to ask you to see that it is hung in the right light—if I may just come and choose a place for it. You know so much depends on light.”

“ Oh, a great deal too late,” exclaimed Sir Frederick, “ quite against all rules.” And then he lowered his voice. The picture was not looked at. The stalwart, powdered footman replaced it in the carriage, and the urbane Sir Frederick escorted the disgusted lady back to her equipage.

A few years ago, also on the outsiders' varnishing day, I met Sir John Millais looking terribly ill and feeble, leaning on the arm of the secretary of the Royal Academy. He had come to take his last look at the galleries. It was a most pathetic sight : he who had

always been so handsome and vigorous was tottering about like a very old man, his voice gone, tears in his eyes, saying good-bye to the Royal Academy, the scene of his many triumphs. I never beheld anyone so altered in a comparatively short time. Some of his friends came up, but he waved them away; he was broken-hearted. He knew that he was a doomed man. He died a few months later.

However much the Royal Academy is abused—it often deserves the censure—every artist is anxious to have his or her works exhibited there, for the public believes in the Royal Academy; there is no other exhibition of pictures which so attracts the multitude. It is always crowded.

The picture dealers are really the men who, on the whole, do most harm to modern art by taking up (as the phrase goes) young painters who have made a hit in the Royal Academy, and giving them commissions to go on painting in the same style of subject as the picture which made the success. If it is pathetic, “go on being pathetic;” if grotesque, “go on being grotesque. It is expected of you,” they say. “My clients want the same line of subject,” and so on, and so on, instead of leaving the painter to work out his own mood. Some wealthy men, who know nothing of art, go to a picture dealer for advice about what to buy. Instead of visiting studios and getting what they themselves like, they simply want to make the best possible investment—they buy for a rise.

I have been to dozens of so-called private views. The greater proportion of the remarks I have heard are about the prices that have been fetched. There is no

sort of criticism on the method of painting, on light and shade, composition or expression. "Oh, how pretty, or nice, or smooth." Inanities of that kind are bandied about by the ignorant. There is little love of art for art's sake amongst the English multitude ; in fact, their ignorance is almost incredible. Abroad the general taste is more cultivated. The greatest painters there are always ready to give advice to students. Not only do they have *ateliers* for pupils, which they constantly visit, but they reserve a morning when any student can bring his or her work to be criticised. In London, if you have a special introduction to one of the Royal Academicians, as a great favour he may now and then glance at the work ; but it is not done *con amore* ; you feel that it is exceptional. Pictures are mediocre, because there are too many pictures. There is a perfect plethora of painted canvas ; the number exhibited in Bond Street alone is remarkable. If fifty good pictures were produced yearly it would be vastly preferable to this overflow of weak productions. As it is, a picture deluge would be a blessing ; but it is a sad sign of the times, for it shows how hard the battle of life is now. Picture painting is an expensive study ; models, canvases, paints are *de rigueur*. Not so with literature. With a few shillings' outlay a novel can be written ; if successful, hundreds of pounds can be made by it. Of course I refer to money expenditure only.

Photography, as a means of illustrating, is rapidly taking the place of black and white work. Indeed, there is too much of everything commonplace and too little of sincere great art.

Art criticism is not treated as seriously or as ably

in England as it is abroad. People who really know nothing about art are asked by editors to write notices of exhibitions, and generally they are most inadequately done by flippant men and women, glad to perpetuate a joke, or dismiss, with an ignorant observation, serious work.



## SUCCESS

ONE afternoon, as I was walking in Chelsea, my attention was suddenly arrested by the sight of a lovely little boy. His long, golden, curly hair fell naturally over his shoulders; his features were exquisitely chiselled; he had splendid violet eyes, with a wistful expression that charmed me. Not only was he beautiful, but, though simply dressed, he had an aristocratic air. He was accompanied by a respectable-looking, middle-aged woman.

They were seated on a bench on the Embankment, watching boats on the river. I sat next to the little boy, and happening to have some chocolates in my pocket, offered them to the child, who seemed pleased. He asked the woman if he might eat them.

We entered into conversation, and the woman informed me that she had charge of the child while her lady was abroad. I asked if I might paint a picture of the boy, and offered to pay her a shilling per hour if she would bring him to my house. This she consented to do.

I had him measured for a blue velveteen coat, and made a white lace *jabot*. When arrayed in that garment, he looked as if he had stepped out of a picture by Gainsborough. The expression only a Perugino, a Fra Angelico, or a Raphael could have done justice to.

The boy was delicate; indeed the woman told me

that the doctor had said he could not live through a bitter London winter. She read *Down the Snow Stairs* to him while he posed for me. The subject inspired me. I worked, *con amore*, and the result surprised me ; never had I executed anything with so much style or beauty. I remember Mr W. G. Wills, who was my kindest and severest critic, congratulating me. When I showed the pastel to Sir Frederick Leighton, who seldom praised, he was charmed with the loveliness of the face. I sent the portrait to be framed in a shop in the Brompton Road, and the man, while the frame was being made, put a glass over it to protect the work, and placed it in his window.

Every day I received letters of inquiry asking my terms for painting children's portraits in the style of the pastel of the golden-haired boy. Most of the inquiries were from members of the aristocracy ; carriages with powdered footmen rolled up to the door, grand ladies marched into our little drawing-room, begging me to execute portraits of their children in the same manner.

I recollect an elderly man coming in one afternoon. He sent a message that he would like to speak to the artist, but gave no name. I saw him in my little den. He praised the modern "Blue Boy," as he dubbed my pastel, and offered to buy it. I refused, on the ground that I might not be able a second time to succeed so well. It was a golden egg. I was grateful for the offer, but the pastel was the means of getting me commissions. When going away he handed me his card.

It was the late Lord Essex, whose art collection near Watford is famous.

If I had then been quite up to the mark, and had had sufficient self-confidence to undertake the many commissions for children's portraits which were pouring in, I could have made my fortune ; but I was nervous, and the fear of not succeeding in catching likenesses sometimes paralysed me. But amongst the interesting orders which, however, I did execute, was a life-sized pastel portrait of Lady Margaret Stuart, daughter of the late Marquis of Bute. I painted this at Chiswick House—it was an ordeal. I was extremely nervous, and the little girl, though charming, was a fidget and restless. She had a pale, sensitive face, hair which hung loose about her neck ; she wore a long white muslin dress and *fichu*, and a broad pink sash. In spite of difficulties I managed to get a likeness. I once met the late Marquis, who struck me as being shy but kindly. He showed me some pastels of his ancestors in perfect preservation.

I also did sketches of the lovely children of Lord and Lady Herries (Lady Herries was a sister of the Marchioness of Bute). I painted about that time old Admiral Harcourt. He was so aged and feeble that he did not seem to understand what I was about ; I may say that he was really on the threshold of another world, his nurse had to hold his head in order that I might draw it. In the afternoon there was a storm, and a sudden gust of wind shook the room. The old Admiral put up his hand. I asked what it meant. The nurse said that evidently he thought that he was at sea, and was giving an order.

A few weeks later I heard of his death.

Besides painting pastel portraits I had some commissions to copy pictures at the National Gallery. The "Hheads of Angels," by Sir Joshua Reynolds, was a favourite picture, as they were admirably suited for the delicate pastel medium. At this time I got more orders than I really wanted. One of the pictures which fascinated me most was the portrait of Andrea del Sarto, painted by himself. I recalled Robert Browning's lines—

" I often am much wearier than you think,  
This evening more than usual ;  
I, painting from myself, and to myself  
Know what I do, am unmoved by men's blame,  
Or their praise either."

His melancholy, handsome face, with the unutterably sad eyes, fascinated me. While copying the portrait, I thought of his miserable domestic life ; of Andrea's worship of a wife so utterly unworthy of him, who through her love of money ended by bringing disgrace on his illustrious name. No wonder, then, that his eyes were veiled with melancholy, his mouth tremulous with repressed feeling ! Though a difficult task, it was a congenial one.

One afternoon I became conscious of a presence behind me. I was too engrossed in my work to take particular notice, but the presence drew nearer, and through the corners of my eyes I saw a pair of thick boots. The wearer coughed. It was not a big cough, but a series of little husky sounds that irritated me. I longed for the man to choke and expire ; really if he were to remain much longer I must inflict some stains of paint on his person.

"Beautiful!" exclaimed a voice, with an Irish intonation.

I turned round and beheld an elderly man dressed all in black, evidently in mourning.

"Excuse me, miss," he exclaimed, taking off his hat, and displaying a baldish head with grey hair. "I like your copy better than the original; it is fresher, smoother, nicer. I am on the look out for some one to paint my portrait, a present for my dear wife on her birthday." Saying this he planted himself in front of me, so that I had a thorough good view of him.

There could not be a more striking contrast to the beautiful, refined, melancholy Andrea del Sarto than that presented by this highly-coloured old Irishman.

"Now, will you undertake my picture, miss?"

"What sized portrait would you like?" I asked.

"Head and shoulders will do. But I don't like the old masters' style, they put the paint on so thick, and too dark. I don't care for that man Rembrandt, he is too lumpy; I want my portrait to be quite smooth and shiny—plenty of oil."

I could not refrain from laughing.

"I don't pretend to be a judge of art—I am an old farmer and live in the north of Ireland—all I require is a portrait that is like me, and no lumps; and I want those studs painted in my shirt, they were a present from my wife."

I felt this portrait would give me trouble and never enhance my artistic reputation; but art is expensive, and as I wanted money, was not in a position to refuse a commission. So it was agreed that he should come to the house on the following day.



I looked sadly at Andrea del Sarto's portrait. He seemed to sympathise with me, to whisper "Courage."

This old Irish farmer happened to be the father of the present Sir Robert Hart, of Chinese fame. A simple, religious man, justly proud of his remarkable son. When I visited the north of Ireland I called on the old Harts. It gave me a shock to see in the little farm house my portrait, gorgeously framed, under plate glass. It was so brutally like, it was too true, I had softened nothing, and it was as smooth as a tea tray. I should have liked to put a knife through the canvas; it was such a thoroughly inartistic production—the black coat looked so new, the shirt front bulged out like a fat pigeon's breast; in fact, it would have done for a country inn's sign-post of mine host with a tankard of beer.

Old Mr Hart, who was a very religious man, never undertook anything without praying beforehand. The *viva voce* prayers were often accompanied by the grunting of pigs. I spent a few days with the Harts, who lived in the simplest way. I also painted from a photograph a portrait in oils of a daughter who had recently died.

As I was anxious to earn my own livelihood and be independent I executed a great many portraits of people who were anything but prepossessing; but the most trying were what the French call *Beautes passées*, and fashionable women who only thought of their smart clothes. Children appealed to me; on the whole they were the most conscientious sitters, and if read to remained quiet. But only a portrait painter can realise what an ungrateful profession it is, for everybody sees a face differently.



## A PASTEL PORTRAIT AT WINDSOR CASTLE

THE QUEEN—LADY PONSONBY

AFTER my success with my Blue Boy (I call him so because he had a blue velvet coat) I had a great many commissions to execute portraits, especially of children. Amongst the number I painted the little daughters of Mr Warre Cornish, who was then a master, and is now vice-provost of Eton College. Lady Ponsonby, who was calling on Mrs Cornish, saw the sketches, and she asked me to do a pastel of her little son, page of the late Queen, and of her daughter in the same style.

I went to the "Norman Tower," Windsor Castle, with a certain amount of nervousness, but Lady Ponsonby soon put me at my ease. She is one of the most accomplished and most intellectual women I have ever met (she had been a great friend of George Eliot); she was an excellent art critic, had a correct eye, and having been well trained in art, her suggestions were valuable, for she knew what she was talking about. Most people when they make remarks about a picture are unsettling, for they do not know anything, and their suggestions are misleading.

The late Queen was then staying at Windsor. Her Majesty would probably see the portraits, and perhaps enter the room when I was at work. That idea was a nightmare, for I disliked anyone to look

at my sketch in the early stages. I had an absurd notion about royalty, and imagined that if an eye or nose were out of drawing, I might get into serious trouble.

I enjoyed drawing Miss Ponsonby (she has since married), she was so amusing and a first-rate mimic. Her imitation of the great actress Sarah Bernhardt, and her gestures, was so admirable that I seemed actually to see and hear her. Miss Ponsonby recited in French the chief *rôles* of Sarah Bernhardt. It was quite a treat, and I felt sorry when the *séances* were over. The likeness was good. Sir Frederick Leighton, who happened one day to go to Windsor to have an audience of the Queen, called on his old friend, Lady Ponsonby, and she showed him my pastel, which he kindly most carefully criticised. He discovered ten little faults, which he wrote out for me, and called "His ten commandments." This was valuable; the next sitting I improved the portrait. The sketch of the little page Her Majesty liked very much. Lady Ponsonby told me that the Queen had remarked that she liked my treatment of pastels, for it was light and bright, and not an imitation of oil painting. This queenly criticism pleased me, for it was shrewd and true; pastels ought to look soft and bright, almost vapoury; so many artists now try to imitate the strength of oils, and so lose the charm of pastel.

Lady Ponsonby told me that the Queen asked her if I would like to work in pastels one of her grandchildren—I think the Duchess of Connaught's little girl. Unfortunately Lady Ponsonby said that the Queen might look in while I was at work. This

prospect of painting a royal child alarmed me. Suppose I failed in catching the likeness, or got my sketch out of drawing, how terrible it would be for the Queen to see my wretched effort. Instead of clutching at this fine chance of painting Royalty, I felt miserable. Lady Ponsonby noticed how uneasy and nervous I was at the prospect. A few days later she showed me a note (which I have) from H.R.H. Princess Beatrice, in which she wrote that "Mama" (the Queen) "thinks that it would be better to wait a little till the child is older and less restless."

I was relieved, although my friends blamed me for showing the white feather. My fortune, if I had been successful, would have been made, and so on. Perhaps even the Queen herself would have given me an order to paint her.

The only one who sympathised with me was Sir Frederick Leighton; he was very nervous, and disliked portrait painting. But he told me that though it was anxious work, the Queen and the rest of the Royal family were most considerate and kind; but the entourage was no doubt alarming, and Court etiquette especially so to an unconventional person like myself. Certainly, for such an ordeal an artist must be completely at his or her ease whilst at work. I recollect Sir Frederick telling me of a portrait he was then painting of a pretty woman. Fourteen members of her family came to his studio; all contradicted each other about the different features; no two agreed about anything. "Yes, portrait painting is an ungrateful trade," remarked the modern Apelles, shrugging his shoulders.

One afternoon as I was leaving Lady Ponsonby's,

carrying my portfolio, no gloves on my hand, looking rather untidy altogether, for I had been hard at work on Miss Ponsonby's portrait, I caught sight of a dignified little lady, simply attired in black, accompanied by a taller lady. They were both approaching the Norman Tower ; when quite close I recognised that the shorter lady was the Queen of England. Her Majesty glanced at the portfolio ; she evidently guessed that I was the artist painting Miss Ponsonby's portrait. I can never forget Her Majesty's bright, kindly smile ; there was something so motherly, sympathetic, intelligent in her face that I deeply, then and there, regretted that I had shown the white feather *à propos* of the portrait of the Royal grandchild. If I had succeeded I might have had a commission to paint Her Majesty, and who knows but that it might have been (*modestie à part*) the best one ever done, for I had noticed an expression that no painter has done justice to. But it was always my unfortunate tendency then to see the dark side of a situation. In my mind's eye I saw myself drawing abominably the little Princess, perhaps omitting to put in the nostrils, or placing one eye higher than the other, the head out of proportion, and so on, the Queen standing behind me aghast, horrified at my performance, the Court ladies tittering. In a fit of despair I would certainly put my knife through the canvas, burst into tears, and then rush out of the castle, sprain my ankle, tumble down, then be picked up by some stately official, dragged back, locked up in a tower and not have any liberty till I had given the Queen entire satisfaction. Such was my nightmare till I beheld the late Queen.

## JOHN RUSKIN

IT was at Oxford in the refined artistic drawing-room of the late Warden of Keble, Dr Talbot, now Bishop of Rochester, that I first met John Ruskin. I was then painting a pastel protrait of Mrs Talbot's (she is a daughter of the late Lord Lyttleton) little boy Neville\* now Lieutenant Neville Talbot, serving under his uncle, General Lyttleton, in South Africa. I was on that particular day in the Slough of Despond. Nobody, except an artist, can realise the difficulty of painting a child's portrait ; it is always an anxious task, but when the little sitter has quicksilver in its veins, and seems unable to remain still for more than a minute at a time, it is hopeless. The boy wriggled up his nose, jumped about ; I was in despair. Then to my dismay I heard his sister remark, who was then gazing out of the window, "Oh, here comes Mr Ruskin."

"Mr Ruskin," I gasped out, "you don't mean the great Mr Ruskin, the art critic?"

"I know that he tells us fairy tales," and she bounded out of the room. I followed her example ; for on no account must Mr Ruskin see my performance, so I clutched hold of my drawing and disappeared by a side door, but I had a glimpse of the great writer—

\* It was this little boy who said to Gladstone (his uncle), "Is it true what nurse says, that you are ruining the country?" Nurse standing at the door—what a *tableau*!



a smallish man, with thick, greyish hair, bushy eyebrows, underneath which were deep-set, kindly eyes.

A few years previously, when I was still in the gushing period of my life, I had, without ever having met John Ruskin, written to him for advice on art matters, and had received several characteristic letters. Later on, I had consulted him upon a subject which then seriously occupied my thoughts. Evidently my letter had interested him, for he answered at great length. A fortnight or so after I had received his reply, I got a missive dated from Venice, requesting me to send my letter (which he returned), and his reply, to the printer of the *Fors Clavigera*, in order that they might both be inserted in the forthcoming number.

I was dismayed. Though my name was not to appear, I felt certain that any friend, or even acquaintance would recognise me as the author, it was so characteristic ; and, as I was a *donna mobile*, I was likely to change my mind about the subjects on which I had written to Mr Ruskin. I reflected over the pros and cons of the situation. Mr Ruskin's note was peremptory. I could gather from his few lines that he wished my epistle to be printed. I made up my mind that I would not obey, at the risk of losing for ever any interest he might have had in me ; so taking my courage *dans mes deux mains* (as the French say) I wrote to him saying that I hoped he would print his answer, but that nothing would induce me to have my letter published in the *Fors Clavigera*.

A few days after I received a very scolding reply, with a string of most unflattering epithets from the great man. He seemed amazed at my daring to



oppose his wish in this matter, and the correspondence ceased.

Several years had elapsed, and the great art teacher was actually paying a visit in the house where I was struggling over a child's portrait. I fervently hoped that he would not hear anything about me. I shut myself up in a bed-room, locked up the portrait in a cupboard, put the key in my pocket, and paced up and down the room in an agitated state of mind.

A tap at the door and Mrs Talbot's eldest daughter called out, "Come downstairs, please. Mother wants you in the drawing-room."

I opened the door. "Is Mr Ruskin gone?" I asked.

"No ; he wishes to meet you ; I heard him say so."

"Who told him I am here?" glancing at the little girl.

"Mother did. Come along, he is such a nice man."

She disappeared. I literally tottered downstairs, feeling almost ill with agitation. Would Mr Ruskin allude to my impulsive letter and to my open rebellion?

I stood for a few seconds on the mat ; the drawing-room door was half open, Mr Ruskin was seated on a divan, his back was turned, the three children were round him, neither Dr Talbot nor Mrs Talbot were present ; no sound save the finely modulated voice—soft, sympathetic, penetrating.

"This giant brandished a big sword, then leapt upon a big brown horse."

I heard him utter these words. His peculiar pronunciation of the letter "r" struck me ; he had a kind of burr.

It was a charming scene. Ruskin evidently enjoyed the fairy tale as much as his small audience. The evening light was stealing in, casting mysterious shadows ; it was a harmonious setting. I stood there fascinated, no longer afraid ; the sweet, soft voice conquered me.

But my hour had come, for my little sitter, catching sight of me, shouted, "Here she is! You know," peering earnestly into Mr Ruskin's face, "she is painting my face, not my legs or feet, only a big head."

I could have choked this terrible child on the spot. But a hand took hold of mine ; a pair of deep-set, pathetic, grey-blue eyes, with a twinkle of amusement, rested upon my flushed face.

"So here you are. We meet at last in the flesh. I am glad to see you here," said Mr Ruskin.

I found myself seated near the master. He did not look as if he remembered my past act of rebellion ; if he did, evidently I was forgiven.

"So you are painting this young rascal?" pointing to little Neville. "At all events, you have a fine subject for colour—the Titian hair," stroking the boy's curly head. "You like drawing children? you ought to go to Ireland. I never saw so many lovely faces as I did when I was there ; the beggars especially—such exquisite colouring, such beautiful eyes."

Like Topsy of old, who blurted without reflecting about her words, I exclaimed,—

"It would not pay to paint Irish beggar-children ; and, alas! I have to earn money."

"Not pay!" thundered out Ruskin, with a fine

expression of scorn on his face. "What a sentiment! Never work for money, it is degradation; you cannot execute anything of merit if actuated by so mean a motive. No; you must love art for its own sake. That unhappy system of Kensington has raised up a countless multitude of inferior artists, vainly struggling to live by what will not grow a grain of wheat or stick a rag together. I assure you I would far rather, if I had a daughter, that she were a scullery-maid, or a milkmaid, than a London hack artist."

Then, feeling ashamed, I muttered something about not liking to paint for money, and that I did not care to be rich.

"That is nonsense. You are far too impulsive, and talk sometimes without thinking, though you have often shown that you have plenty of common sense and spirit, but if what you say now is quite true, you would be an absurd creature to hate to be rich. Think now, how you would feel, if a messenger came from the Bank of England saying you might draw unlimitedly. Don't flatter yourself that the feeling would only be charitable."

Mr Ruskin struck me as very inconsistent. He puzzled, and yet charmed me.

"Art is a severe taskmaster," he continued, in a more serious tone of voice. "To succeed you must drudge and love your work. You cannot serve God and Mammon."

And he asked me what I had been lately studying. I told him that I had been copying some autotypes from Michael Angelo's Sistine Chapel.

"What<sup>?</sup> has an Irish girl to do with Michael

Angelo?" he exclaimed, smiling. "You are half Irish. Now, go to Nature, study her lovingly, that is the real teacher. You have a gift for colour; study form; and do everything as well as you can, even if you give a month's work for half-a-crown; no matter, it is practice and future capital. Now, I have preached enough, and must go on with my fairy story."

Once more the children gathered round him, the sympathetic voice continued the giant's adventures.

The next time I met Ruskin was at Cromwell House, South Kensington, at the time when the beautiful *tableaux-vivants* of the *Tale of Troy* were given. Mr George Alexander was the stage manager on this occasion, and Ruskin, who was one of the guests, was so much struck with the beauty and cleverness of the scenic arrangements that, as a token of his admiration, he presented the young actor with a valuable edition of Shakespeare's works.

I met Ruskin once again at an exhibition of pictures, mostly by impressionists. When the great critic perceived me, he exclaimed, "Leave this place; don't allow your eyes to dwell on these impertinent, insolent daubs. It is a sin to prostitute a noble calling in such a miserable way. It really makes me feel ill."

This was the last time I ever saw Ruskin.

## LORD LEIGHTON AND SIR JOHN MILLAIS

It was our old friend Robert Browning who kindly took me to—the then—Sir Frederick Leighton's studio in Holland Park Road, Kensington, one Sunday afternoon, the day set apart by the President to see his friends and acquaintances.

Mr Browning had met Frederick Leighton when quite young in Rome. “Fred Leighton is extremely kind to young artists and students. He is sincere and conscientious, and you cannot do better than follow his advice,” remarked Mr Browning. “He is broad and tolerant in his views of art, and is an indefatigable worker.”

We approached the house. I felt nervous at the prospect of meeting the “Modern Apelles.” I had often seen him driving in his carriage, had noticed his striking face and figure at theatres and concerts. His outside was familiar; now I was going to hear the great man talk, to see him in his studio amongst his works. It was interesting and exciting. As we entered the gorgeous Arab hall, with its Oriental enchantments, Damascus tiles, marbles, and a fountain falling into a marble basin, I felt transported into a living page of the famous *Arabian Nights*. I expected every minute to see a Geni coming out of the Cairo lattice-work or Aladdin with his wonderful lamp—it

cast a spell over me. A gorgeous stuffed peacock, with outstretched wings of brilliant hues, harmonised with the general scheme of colour in the hall. We went up the staircase leading to the studio ; the walls were lined with fine pictures ; beautiful silk and satin draperies hung in every corner. It was a festival of colour. Round the upper wall of the studio ran a cast of the Parthenon frieze. Beneath were hung no end of pictures and studies taken in Greece, the East, Italy, Scotland and Egypt, full of vitality and colour ; also there were statuettes in bronze and clay, works of the accomplished artist. About ten minutes after our arrival Sir Frederick entered ; his voice, which, though high pitched, was musical, resounded in apologies for his delay in appearing. Someone had called about an important matter which had delayed him.

After shaking hands with Mr Robert Browning I was introduced. My hand was also shaken cordially by Sir Frederick. His smile was most engaging ; his fine head reminded me of a bust I had seen of a Greek god, the features classic and finely chiselled ; his hair turning grey had the appearance of being powdered. He wore that day a blue velveteen coat and waistcoat, and a salmon-coloured necktie ; his manner was graceful ; his address was that of *l'homme du monde*. He put me at once at my ease ; certainly he was *un Prince Charmant*. He showed us his pictures and appealed to Mr Browning concerning some scenery which formed the background of one of them. Leighton was like his own work, a lover of form, but he had no impulse, no spontaneity, everything was thoroughly thought out. His sketches had more life than his



finished pictures, which seemed to be over-laboured and over-studied. He showed me a great many sketches, in black and white chalk and pencil, on brown or blue paper, of hands, feet, figures, draperies, etc., which proved his endless patience, conscientious trouble and indefatigable work. He certainly had the genius of taking pains—too much pains perhaps; for his pictures, though magnificent as decorative paintings, lacked impulse.

On that afternoon several foreigners called. I was surprised to hear Sir Frederick Leighton speak to each in his native tongue—Italian, German and French—with equal facility.

He was certainly the most orderly and precise of men, one could see that by his environment. "I keep all my engagements written down in this note-book," he exclaimed; "sometimes I engage models months in advance for a certain day and hour. All my social and other engagements are down in this little book. If I was not extremely methodical, I never could get through. Every moment is planned out. Now (smiling kindly at me) you want me to see some of your studies (looking at his book). I can give you a quarter of an hour next Thursday at ten o'clock. I am always in my studio at work at eight o'clock." Then he turned to Mr Browning, "How is Pen getting on with his painting? Tell him from me to try and cultivate more the sense of beauty. Art must be lovely, a delight to the eye."

The great poet and the President of the Royal Academy were most dissimilar, not only in character and manner but in appearance. Mr Browning, shrewd,

keen-eyed and with quick, alert movements, looked more like a stockbroker than a bard. Sir Frederick was the ideal prince of painters, with charming, courtly manners and an engaging smile ; even the curl of hair on his forehead looked as if it had been put there on purpose ; his graceful gestures, everything about him, fitted in harmoniously with the beauty of the surroundings in his house and studio.

He struck me as rather effeminate and Greek—I wondered inwardly if Leighton ever went about in a dressing-gown and slippers, and could possibly eat anything so vulgar as roast beef or mutton. His sisters, however, told me that when they asked him what he would like for dinner on his birthday, he said roast mutton and suet pudding.

“I shall now take you to Millais,” said Mr Browning, as we left Sir Frederick Leighton’s.

“It seems a matter of regret that painters think it necessary nowadays to keep up such splendid establishments as Leighton and Millais do,” remarked Mr Browning. He supposed it was a good advertisement, as the English public especially believed that wealth meant success. “Pictures pay better than my poetry,” he added with a grim smile. “Mine is not a paying trade ! At all events my works don’t make money ; I daresay most people think I am more or less of a failure, because I live in an unfashionable quarter, and ride in omnibuses instead of a brougham. There are so many fools in the world !” (a favourite expression of the poet’s).

Uttering this remark, Mr Browning rang at the splendid mansion in Palace Gate—Sir John Millais’s.

Millais received us heartily. He was quite as handsome as Sir Frederick, but it was a more virile English style of looks ; one might have taken him for a fine specimen of the English country gentleman. His manner was as boisterous as a schoolboy's, his voice loud and ringing, his eyes keen, observant. " I tell you what I could enjoy now, a mug of foaming ale, a clay pipe in a village inn. I have been so hard at work painting that I long for rural pleasures ! "

Millais then inquired after Pen. " I liked his ' Worker in Brass ' ; it does him much credit. I am glad he sold his picture ; it will encourage him, besides, painting is a big expense—studios, models, paints, frames—all that is necessary. Now, you writers have no such outlay—foolscap, pens, ink, blotting-paper, cost a few shillings, and now and then you can make a heap of money. Tell Pen to stay a little longer at Antwerp, and to paint what he sees about him ; there is plenty to do, if he keeps his eyes open, without going back, like Leighton, to old Greek art—though I respect his devotion to his own highest ideal. What can be more beautiful than an English girl, an English child or a landscape? Nothing like painting one's surroundings and time. I believe that, and now practise what I preach."

I liked Millais's voice and bluff manner ; there was something so human and jolly in his personality. He did not make preparatory studies for his pictures ; his work was all impulse ; he thoroughly enjoyed painting, and dashed away on the canvas with fiery energy. There were several pictures of children which delighted me. He caught the sweet gravity and

unconsciousness of childhood. Leighton's work was far less vital. Millais seemed to be all impulse. He was very outspoken and genial. He talked more appreciatively of Pen Browning's work than Leighton did, which naturally pleased Mr Browning.

"I am glad you don't make all children smile," remarked Mr Browning, looking at three wistful little faces on the easels.

"Children as a rule are serious," answered Millais; "they are far more sincere than we grown-ups; they don't have those false society smiles."

"And you don't paint them all with big eyes," continued Mr Browning, smiling; "and mouths like rosebuds, where no food could possibly enter."

"I prefer small eyes," said Millais, "even as a matter of beauty; so do most of the old boys! In Holbein's portraits, for example, the eyes are never big; it is only on *bonbon* boxes that the so-called beauties have invariably large lustrous orbs!"

Then Millais talked about his fishing in Scotland, longing for the rod. He was breezy—full of enthusiasm for the sport.

On the following Thursday, at the hour appointed, I rang the bell of Leighton's house in Holland Park Road. I certainly felt a certain amount of fear and trembling; never did I think so badly of my work; it was truly an ordeal to have to show my studies to the most fastidious and most learned painter of the day.

An elderly butler opened the door; and, with a broad smile, remarked that he was glad I was punctual, for, he added, "We are going early this afternoon to

Sandringham on a visit to their R.H. the Prince and Princess of Wales. Sir Frederick has a lot to do."

"The 'we' amused me; the servant identified himself completely with his illustrious master. I waited for the President of the Royal Academy in a study close to the Arab Hall. There were several drawings and etchings hanging on the walls, amongst them being a portrait of his great friend, the burly Val Princep, by Legros.

The modern Apelles did not keep me waiting. He looked particularly handsome in a golden-brown velveteen coat. I was so nervous that I could not untie the string of my portfolio.

"I shall cut the Gordian knot!" he exclaimed, smiling, "and you will have a new string." Saying this he produced a penknife, and the deed was done.

The first study I showed him was that of a street urchin in rags, with bare legs and feet, sucking an orange in the street.

"In some respects it is not bad," said Sir Frederick; "but why choose such an ugly subject as a grimy street boy? Art ought to be beautiful; to be pretty is the great thing, especially in a woman's work."

I felt slightly piqued. Why should there be a sex in art? but I did not make any remark.

"Of course," continued Sir Frederick, "Velasquez, Murillo, Rembrandt, those grand old fellows, could make everything beautiful; but they are gone, and have no successors. Now, that is far better," smiling at the profile of a pretty, fair face, very smooth and



highly finished, which I thought like a head on a *bon-bon* box.

Sir Frederick's criticism disappointed me. Instead of looking at things as a great whole—the *ensemble*, as the French say—he directed his attention to small details, such as the corner of an eye, or the wing of the nose. One study of a man's head, which I had painted under Legros in the Slade School, he found great fault with. It was, he considered, a mistake for the inexperienced to try rapid work. He was quite against the impressionists; it often meant impertinence. And as for students trying for quick effects, he considered it disastrous. He again referred to the works of the old masters: their careful finish of mere detail; nothing was slurred over by that greatest painter Velasquez. He regretted that the “deucedly” clever work of some of the younger school was getting popular. “Clever” was a word never used when speaking of the old masters' works. The word *clever* he considered the destruction of real serious art. He advised me not even to look at the work of the impressionists; but to study men like Dürer or Holbein. “To complete satisfactorily is what we painters live for!” he exclaimed.

In order to correct a fault in one of my drawings, he sat on the floor at my feet, and, with a piece of white chalk, drew in the *contour* of a leg. So I had the President at my feet. Sir Frederick advised me now and then to copy at the National Gallery. “The study of first-rate work is like a tonic,” he remarked, “and keeps up a higher standard.” He showed me the colours he used on his palette, his various brushes, medium, and made no secret or mystery. At that



time Sir Frederick began by painting almost in monochrome, umber and white. Then when the drawing and modelling were correct, he would proceed with the colour. He thought out the whole picture before he put charcoal or brush on canvas.

When the quarter of an hour had elapsed, Sir Frederick re-tied my portfolio, asking me to come again when I had anything to criticise.

Sir Frederick's striking characteristic was certainly love of order and form. He used frequently to remark: "As we are, so our work is!" He never lowered the standard of his work, but kept to his own highest ideal. His life was regulated by form. He never neglected answering a letter or note, never forgot an appointment, was the soul of punctuality, and always courteous and kindly.

Sir Frederick once remarked in my presence that people thought he had great influence in the hanging of pictures in the Royal Academy; but that such was not the case. A striking instance of this was when Robert Browning's son sent his big statue (in bronze) of "Dryope" to the Academy. Sir Frederick exercised all the influence he had to try and get a good place in the Sculpture Gallery, and yet it was rejected. Messrs Horsley, Faed, and many of the older academicians considered the statue coarse, so "Dryope" had to take refuge in the Grosvenor Gallery. Sir Coutts Lindsay took pity on the discarded nymph, and found a place for her there. Mr Browning was most indignant, and never forgave Burlington House for rejecting what he considered the grand statue of "Dryope" (it had cost about £1000), his son's finest

work of art. It was a melancholy sight to see poor "Dryope" on her way back from Burlington House! The statue is now in the courtyard of the Palazzo Rezzonico in Venice, and was before that exhibited at the Paris *Salon*. Sir Frederick Leighton, and especially his sister Mrs Sutherland Orr, being such intimate friends of Robert Browning, the blow of the rejection was quite unexpected; so, from that day almost to the last hour of his life nothing pleased Mr Browning more than to hear the Royal Academy well abused. I have seen him turn his back on some of the R.A.'s whom he suspected of being unfriendly to his son's works.

Leighton was disappointed that he had not created a school, and had so very few followers; but his work was more or less *réchauffé*. Besides, there is an artificiality in his art. Greek maidens, in chitons and light draperies, only appeal to the cultured few; but he was successful, considering that he did not, like Millais, belong to his epoch. As a decorative painter he is very great.

Leighton was a remarkable social success. To see him at his best was when he received the guests at the Royal Academy *soirée*. He then wore the chain of office; he stood at the entrance of the hall, and his handsome, dignified presence, his courtly manners, made him the ideal President and the right man adorning the right place.

Once a year Sir Frederick Leighton gave a musical "At home" in his fine studio. Joachim, Patti, the Hallés, etc., delighted the guests. He was extremely popular, especially with women. Why doesn't Leighton marry? was constantly asked. He was over-

fastidious ; besides, in his early manhood, and till within fifteen years before his death, he had been attached to the gifted Adelaide Kemble Sartoris. Though she was much older, she exercised a tremendous influence over him. Leighton was a special favourite at Court with the present King and Queen. Their Royal Highnesses always went to visit his studio before he sent his pictures to the Royal Academy. I have constantly seen his lovely model, Dorothy Deane and her pretty sisters. Dorothy had pretty brown eyes, with long, curly lashes ; delicately-chiselled features, and an aureole of light golden hair ; her throat, neck, and arms were beautiful. Of late years she was Leighton's constant model ; her sisters also posed for him. One of them married Herbert Schmalz, the painter. She and Dorothy are now both dead. They died in the prime of life. Leighton was most kind and generous to the family, providing for them after his death ; but Dorothy Deane only survived the illustrious painter a couple of years. Another of Leighton's models was a real gipsy, *farouche* and fine ; also an Italian girl whom he sent to my studio. She was a curious type—austerely chaste and handsome. She always carried a small dagger concealed under her bodice, in case any one dared to insult her. She spent the money she made by posing to artists (for head and hand) in travelling. She loved seeing the world, and had been nearly all over Europe, but always alone. Her tastes were singularly refined. Abdallah, an Indian girl, as dark as a mulatto, lithe, graceful, was a favourite model, and sat for most of the painters. She was a figure model, but went to America finally and joined Barnum's Show.

## MORE ABOUT SIR FREDERICK LEIGHTON, P.R.A.

IT does seem a pity that Leighton, who was really so fond of children, never married. I recollect one afternoon calling at the house of a young painter, a *protégé* of his, when Sir Frederick Leighton was announced. "I have come to see the last baby," he exclaimed in his high but musical voice. "This is the sixth child, is it not? I am longing to inspect the new arrival." The babe was carried in by the proud mother. Sir Frederick took it in his arms, kissed it, and then said, "I must see the feet." The baby's socks were instantly removed.

"Oh, what lovely pink toes!" exclaimed Sir Frederick, examining them; "quite Greek, perfect!" in a rapturous tone of voice. Then I heard him remark to the father in an impressive bytone, "Johnny, you must paint those dear little legs and feet; work hard all day at drawing, modelling and painting, and at night dream of your art. To succeed you must concentrate yourself in your work, live in it; that is why those grand old boys, the old masters, are so great."

Then I saw him watching with genuine delight a couple of kittens gambolling with a ball—the essentially pretty and graceful charmed Sir Frederick Leighton.

Mr W. Hardinge told me that years and years ago he had a long and trying illness, and that Fred Leighton's kindness and attention to him was then unique. Mr Hardinge was also a great friend of the gifted Adelaide Kemble Sartoris, who certainly exercised an extraordinary influence over Leighton. Mr Hardinge was confined to his bedroom for months. One day Leighton arrived with a cartload of his pictures.

"These are to cheer you up," he exclaimed; "I know that you like to look at pretty faces." There and then Leighton hung about a hundred of his pictures and sketches in his friend's room, which they adorned for months. Often he would rush up to Mr Hardinge's chambers in Charles Street, Berkeley Square, with big bunches of roses, fresh from Mrs Sartoris's garden, and distribute them in vases about the sick man's room.

Mrs Sartoris used to call Leighton "Fay."

Frederick Leighton is one of the characters in a *Week in a French Country House*, a charming story by Adelaide Sartoris (Ursula is intended for Mrs Sartoris).

One afternoon at his studio, as I walked in, Sir Frederick had two lovely little fair-haired children (models); they were eating strawberries, while he was holding a baby in order to let the mother of the two drink a cup of tea. It was a living picture. Sir Frederick was delighted because the baby pulled his beard. One of the children models, a sweet child of five, told me seriously that she had made up her mind to marry Sir Frederick Leighton! "He is so kind, such an old dear! He gives me books, flowers,



chocolates, and paints such lovely pictures of me. When I am married to Sir Frederick I will invite you to dinner. Sir Frederick says that when I am his wife my friends will be welcome."

Models have often told me that the only thing that annoyed him was unpunctuality. He hated wasting time; every hour was carefully planned out. I have heard Sir Frederick lament the modern school of impressionism as being dangerous; it was often an excuse for carelessness and impertinence. The old masters were never careless; they took trouble and finished every detail. "Look at Velasquez! How grandly complete—how he paints hands!" The old masters were never called *clever*. This is the term that is used now, because some of the modern impressionists paint with such astonishing dash and vitality. "Don't you even look at the impressionists," he said to me. "It would be your ruin, as it will be the ruin of many a young artist; that brilliant execution is very fascinating. Sargent is deucedly clever (I remember the adjective); he has great knowledge, so he can do anything, accomplish extraordinary technique, but I shudder if he has imitators. Without his learning it would be an impertinence."

Sir Frederick often struck me as being a disappointed man. He regretted not having formed a school, and had few disciples. In Paris some of the young painters called him and Bougereau "Perruques" (wigs), implying that they were old-fashioned, their paintings a mere *réchauffé*. Neither of them belonged to the new movement.



The last time I saw Sir Frederick Leighton was a few weeks before his death. He was looking poorly, but there was nothing to indicate that he would so shortly join the great majority. I addressed him then as Lord Leighton. The peerage had just been bestowed upon him.

"Not yet, but shortly that is to be my new title," he replied smilingly. But on 13th January 1896, Lord Leighton died. He was buried with much state at St Paul's Cathedral. His coffin entered the Cathedral just as the clock was striking. In death, as in life, he was punctual to a minute. It was very touching to see his illustrious *confrère* and old friend, Sir John Millais, depositing the laurel crown on Leighton's coffin. Millais's face was quivering with emotion. I then thought of what I had heard William Thackeray say on returning to London from Rome where he had seen Leighton studying. "Ah, Millais, my boy, I have seen a versatile young dog Leighton, who will one of these days run you hard for the presidentship."

The present King and Queen had affectionate regard for Sir Frederick. I saw in his studio a beautiful chair worked by the then Princess of Wales. "A Present to Sir Frederick from Alexandra."

He was a polished courtier, a thorough *homme du monde*. He had extraordinary versatility and varied accomplishments, for he could do everything well. He had the power of concentrated work, and was thoroughly sincere, especially in his art.

He was the ideal President of the Royal Academy ; his death has made a terrible void ; his place will never

be filled. His was a unique personality, and leaves a delightful impression on the minds of those who knew him. I have heard people say that he was a re-incarnation of Apelles.

I have often seen old Doctor Leighton, father of the President of the Royal Academy; he was a most accomplished man; lived to be over ninety, dying only a few years before his illustrious son. Doctor Leighton was very striking looking; he had a clear, olive-complexioned face, and well-cut features, reminding one of the busts of Dante—the same kind of nose and chin. He was extremely well informed, and up to the last year of his death kept on (as he used to remark) improving his mind—he was even studying a new language.

Mrs Sutherland Orr, Lord Leighton's sister, is the widow of a General; she is still pretty, and resembles much her celebrated brother. She has the same delicate profile and *distingué* manner. She dresses with taste according to her age, generally in rich black silk, with lace over her snowy hair, and looks like a French Marquise sitting in her handsome drawing-room in Kensington Park Gardens, where she used to receive her many friends.

Mr Browning discussed his poems with Mrs Orr. Her *Browning Handbook* is a remarkable work; but her life of the poet is disappointing, for there is no new light thrown on Browning's inner life or character—no glow; it is a cold biography. But Mrs Orr knew that Robert Browning did not care to have his life written, and this feeling evidently paralysed her.

I recollect one afternoon calling with my mother on

the Brownings in De Vere Gardens, Kensington. The poet was standing in front of a big fire burning heaps of letters. As we looked rather surprised he exclaimed, "Now I am an old man, and do not want these letters to survive me, for this publishing of letters adds a new terror to death."

Though Mrs Sutherland Orr was in a bad state of health—having a very weak heart—when she heard that her friend Robert Browning was lying dangerously ill at his son's palace—the Rezzonico at Venice—she started off alone for Italy, travelling day and night, hoping to see the old poet alive—a miserably anxious, sad journey. But as Mrs Orr put her foot on the gondola, that was to convey her to the Rezzonico, a message was sent to her from Pen Browning that his father had just breathed his last.

Mrs Matthews, the other sister, is an accomplished woman, and used to be a great musician on the pianoforte. I have met the famous king of violinists at her house, and can never forget a delightful evening when Joachim played Hungarian music. But Mrs Matthews suffers also from bad health. It seems a pity that such a gifted family leaves no issue.

The beautiful and enchanting Arab hall and studio in Holland Park Road, which Leighton inhabited for so many years, can now be hired for concerts and receptions. *À propos* of the fountain, a well-known painter told me that one evening after dinner several Royal Academicians, who had been dining with the President, sauntered into the hall. It happened to be dimly lit, one after the other walked into the basin of the fountain, and got wet to the knees, most of them

having to borrow trousers from Leighton, while theirs were drying by the fire.

As some of the R.A.'s were short, it must have been an entertaining spectacle to see them wearing the trousers of the tall President.

It is sad to visit the house, now that the distinguished painter is gone. I little thought when I last saw Lord Leighton in Holland Park Road that a few years after his death my own sister, as President of a Guild, would be giving a reception there, and receiving her guests in his studio.

*Erratum.* In line 7, from bottom of page 278, for the words "can now be hired for concerts and receptions," substitute the words "are now accessible to all, as his sisters have given their interest therein for the benefit of the public."

## HIS EMINENCE CARDINAL MANNING

I HAD the privilege of calling on the Cardinal with a friend. This gentleman, being a Roman Catholic, went down on his knees; he was a round, fat little man, and I was surprised to see the agility of his movements. The Cardinal in his scarlet robes looked as if he had stepped out of a picture by Bellini. Only one of the great old masters could have rendered on canvas the soul, the sweet yet austere character of that wonderful old man. He seemed all spirit; he was so lean—no body to speak of—as if he could be blown away by a gust of wind. His self-denying life, his great charity and his humanity, are well-known facts.

His death, indeed, created a terrible void amongst the very poor; how they loved him! I never saw such a crowd as at Cardinal Manning's funeral, an endless following after the little hearse, so pathetic in its utter simplicity. There were great signs of emotion, especially amongst the crowds of poor people. He died, as he lived, a very poor man.

This beloved funeral suggested to me the flight of the Alone (alone in the sublime simplicity of a noble life) to the other Great Alone!

As I witnessed the little, simple hearse with its enormous crowd following, I could not but reflect on



the shortcomings of the Church of England and its representatives. Does it not fail to attract the very poor within its fold? I never see them in the churches as I do abroad. People who cannot afford to dress well in England do not care to be amongst the smug, fashionable, Sunday congregations; the poor feel the humiliation of their lot amongst the rustle of silken garments, the jingle of jewellery, the enormous picture hats, laden with flowers and fruit, the lilac and lemon-coloured gloves. Faded mashers, who sit or stand, stifling well-bred yawns, do not inspire the sense of religion. (But is it religion? That is the question.) In the Roman Catholic cathedrals and churches the poor women, clad in cotton gowns, white caps and aprons, the men in blouses and *sabots*, beggars in rags, seem in harmony with the spirit of the surroundings.

Why is it that the Church of England fails to attract the poor, those who are heavily laden, on their only day of rest? It evidently gives no comfort to those who are weary of striving, weary of the everlasting disappointments, weary of empty sympathy. Is it that it fails because there is no love between the rich and the poor? Is it more or less of a farce? Even the philanthropists who write about their sufferings and make money by doing so, will too seldom go out of their way to give them real help. There are grand exceptions, and Cardinal Manning is one of the most striking I have come across.

After having witnessed the funeral I returned home, and was amused at seeing a magnificent equipage driven by a pair of prancing horses, a coachman and footman; in it was seated a church dignitary. I



recognised the impressive hat—it was either a bishop or a dean ; his face was smug and self-satisfied. No wonder ! He has most of this world's good things, and looks forward to getting the good things of the next world into the bargain.

## SIR CHARLES AND DOWAGER LADY FREAKE

### CROMWELL HOUSE

THE first time I went to Cromwell House was to see a splendid performance of the *Waverley Tableaux-Vivants*, given by the then Mrs Freake, in aid of a great charity. The famous heroines of Sir Walter Scott's novels were portrayed by the so-called professional beauties of the day, among them were Mrs Langtry, Mrs Webster, Miss Craigie Halkett, Mrs Winchester Clowes.

These *tableaux* were arranged by the popular painters, Sir John Millais, Sir Frederick Leighton, W. Q. Orchardson, Luke Fildes, etc. My mother, who was still strikingly handsome, was induced, as it was for a charity, to be "Meg Merrilees" and "Norma."

Royalty was present that evening; Cromwell House was honoured by their R.H. the then Prince and Princess of Wales. What a triumph for the host and hostess! Charles Freake had begun life as a humble workman, but by dint of sagacity, perseverance and energy had amassed a huge fortune. He was a little, stout man, with a large, white-haired head, pale-blue, prominent eyes, a very little nose and rosy cheeks; his manner was straightforward, he had no

pretensions. It was his wife who was socially ambitious. "She is a wonderful woman, my missus!" he often laughingly remarked, "there is not another one like her in London; it is all her doing, for I don't care about having all these Tom-noddies here."

Freake presented the land on which the Royal College of Music is built to the then Prince of Wales. He was shortly after created a baronet. His wife had been well educated; she knew French, played the harp, sketched nicely, composed songs, and even wrote a French play, which was acted in the theatre at Cromwell House—the late Charles Colnaghi, a well-known amateur actor, played the part of the Marquis. She also wrote another play called *Deeds*. Lady Freake had social tact, and received everyone cordially. She was a comely woman about sixty when I first saw her. She was in all her glory that evening, leaning on the arm of our present King, the present Queen leaning on the arm of the wealthy builder, conducting their Royal Highnesses to the supper room. It was the triumphant moment in the Freakes' lives, the realisation of their wildest dreams, their battle of Austerlitz! The worthy couple had worked hard for this honour, and got their reward.

I recollect when my first little picture was hung at the Royal Academy, asking Freake when he went there to look at my work.

"I have never been to the Royal Academy, and indeed to very few places; all my life I have been like a caterpillar on a leaf, hardly been outside my beat," he exclaimed. "All work and little play."

When I was at Cromwell House that brilliant

evening it struck me as resembling a living page in a fairy tale. The host was like the pictures of Father Christmas, his wife was blazing with diamonds in gorgeous surroundings, they were smiling on their royal guests and their distinguished visitors. Everything that money could do was done in order that these entertainments should be successful. All society went to Cromwell House. Charity covers a multitude of sins, whether of omission or commission. The *Waverley Tableaux*, the *Tale of Troy*, etc., were splendidly produced; the latter was under the supervision of Professor Warre, who was then nicknamed "The Trojan War."

I myself saw Gladstone, Ruskin, Robert Browning, Sir Charles Newton, Leighton, Sir Edwin Arnold, Alfred Austen, Tom Taylor, Professor Blackie, etc., among the audience in the Cromwell theatre.

The late Duchess of Teck and the then Princess May were often at Lady Freake's entertainments, not only at Cromwell House but at Bankgrove, Fulwell Park, near Twickenham, Lady Freake's country residence.

The famous Bach Choir's practices were held for many years at Cromwell House. I have met at these entertainments several actors of note, such as Henry Irving, George Alexander, Beerbohm Tree, Arthur Blunt, Grossmith, Clifford Harrison (the two latter constantly recited there), Bancroft and his wife, Corney Grain, Mary Anderson, the Misses Gilbert (sisters of Gilbert the play writer), Percy Fitzgerald, Forbes Robertson, Sir Theodore and Lady Martin, etc., etc.

Lady Freake rather *posed* as a female Mæcenas.

She was a kindly woman, with a good deal of dignity.

The old couple are now both dead ; Sir Charles left the bulk of his enormous fortune to his eldest grandson, who was killed in the hunting field. The second one succeeds to the baronetcy when his father, Sir Thomas, dies. It is to be hoped that this young man will spend worthily the great fortune made by his hard-working old grandfather.

Dowager Lady Freake survived her husband for several years. Up to the last she was surrounded by old friends. Her three granddaughters married well, one being the wife of Sir Percy Pole, Bart.; the youngest, Mrs Cayley, died in childbirth a year after her marriage.

But the glories of Cromwell House are quite over. Apparently there is no one in the family with sufficient energy or talent to fill the place of the kindly but ambitious hostess.

Though Sir Charles and Dowager Lady Freake cannot rank as celebrities, they were, in their way, a remarkable couple ; they both knew what they wanted, and, by dint of hard work, perseverance and tact, accomplished their wishes.

## PROFESSOR JOHN COUCH ADAMS

DISCOVERER OF THE PLANET NEPTUNE

IT was at Cambridge that I had the privilege of meeting the late Loundean Professor of Astronomy, John Couch Adams, the discoverer of the planet Neptune. He was then ailing—suffering from insomnia—yet his dark, brown eyes were peculiarly bright and his complexion ruddy, like an apple. He generally wore a black velvet cap, and looked like a living picture by one of the old masters. What struck me most was the extraordinary humility, almost self-effacement, of this intellectual giant, who was regarded as the greatest astronomer England has had since Newton. When quite a young man Couch Adams applied himself to the investigation of the irregularities of the motion of Uranus, in order to find out whether they might be attributed to the actions of some unknown planet. Simultaneously with the Frenchman Leverrier, Adams showed exactly where a hitherto unknown object was to be found when the telescopes were turned to that part of the heavens.

In general conversation Professor Adams never alluded to this astronomical feat. He was singularly gentle, simple, and most deeply religious. He seemed



to project about him an atmosphere of purity and elevated thought.

There were family prayers every morning at the Observatory. It was Professor Adams who read the Bible, and said the prayers. His singularly reverential attitude, earnestness and almost childlike belief were striking in those days of agnosticism and atheism ; his humble-mindedness stood out in strong relief amongst the pushing log-rolling communities. His wife, an Irish lady, read aloud to him. He delighted in good novels, taking the deepest interest in the characters, just as if they were real living people. Of an evening he played bezique or halma. Amongst his most intimate friends at Cambridge were Sir George Gabriel Stokes and the late Professor Cayley.

I never heard Professor Adams utter a disparaging word against any one ; his pupils were devoted to him ; he was patient, encouraging and kind. Though of a cheerful disposition, he was sometimes depressed at not being able (from ill health) to proceed with high mathematical problems. He was then engaged upon the perturbation of the planet Venus.

While I was staying at the Observatory he was seized with a dangerous illness, which nearly proved fatal. As I was leaving the Observatory I went up to his room one evening to have a glimpse of him. I can never forget how white his face was ; his eyes were closed, he looked deathlike, the features seemed chiselled out of Carrara marble.

It was a glorious night, the moon and stars were shining brightly, and it was a pathetic sight to see the old astronomer lying there prostrated by illness. It

seemed to me that all the heavenly bodies were looking down intently on their enthusiastic and devoted friend and admirer. I wondered if his own particular Neptune was peeping at him. *Che sa!* perhaps the spirit of the great discoverer, when it left the worn-out body, would soar upwards and visit that planet?

## MATHILDE BLIND

I FIRST saw this intellectual woman at Dr Westland Marston's house, in Regent's Park, at one of his Sunday evenings. Mathilde Blind was then striking looking; she had a large head, covered with a thick mass of curly auburn hair, her neck and shoulders were fine, her voice was sonorous, her accent decidedly Teutonic, her laugh loud and hearty. She was absorbed that evening in conversation with the poet Swinburne. I met her several times after. When talking to any one she seemed to forget her surroundings, time, and place. That, I was told, was always the case when she was really interested.

She took a deep interest in Causes, generally her sympathies were on the losing side; she was an enthusiast, and had been a great friend of Mazzini's. When she was a girl at school she was expelled because she professed to be an agnostic. Mathilde was a step-daughter of Karl Blind, but she lived chiefly with friends—she spent several years with the Maddox Brownes. Of late years she was very unhappy and disappointed at not having made a greater reputation; probably she would have been less miserable in herself if she had married. She was over-ambitious, and this ate into her moral nature. In middle age she felt lonely, and had frequent fits of depression; she would

go away, live by herself in out-of-the-way places, then when this dark mood had passed, she would return to London, and once more plunge into the vortex of society, where she had many friends.

Mathilde Blind did not obtain the recognition or the place she deserved in literature ; this no doubt made her wretched. She wrote a short life of George Eliot ; an introduction to Shelley's works ; a novel, *Tarantella* ; she also translated into English the journal of Marie Baschkirtseff. Her chief poems were "The Ascent of Man," and "Birds of Passage" ; the latter were written after her travels in Egypt.

Shortly before her death she had begun to write her reminiscences, but she became terribly ill, and died a few years ago.

## MRS W. K. CLIFFORD

WHEN I was an art student, I used to draw from the antique in the dear and venerable British Museum. Sir Charles Newton was then the Keeper of the Greek and Roman Antiquities. He was a striking-looking old gentleman ; his fine head reminded me of a bust of Jupiter ; indeed most of the officials resembled their occupations. I recollect visiting the big whale ; in the fish and reptiles room downstairs I met a gentleman, either a Keeper or an Assistant-Keeper, who was the image of a cod fish.

I used to see Dr Richard Garnett, a walking dictionary of information, with his delightful smile, usually carrying a black bag, and often followed by his cat. Dr Garnett, quaint and courteous, seemed to be the personification of the ideal *savant*. He became Keeper of Books in the British Museum, and is the gifted author of *Twilight of the Gods*, and many other volumes.

Amongst the students there was one girl in particular who attracted my attention. She was like a sunbeam in this austere building ; she had bright, golden, fluffy hair, eyes sparkling with life and fun, and cheeks resembling ripe peaches. Her merry laugh was refreshing to hear. It was a treat to see so happy a being amongst the statues, torsos, and the Egyptian

mummies. Often she hummed a tune. I inquired whot his bright young creature was, and heard it was Miss Lucy Lane, who shortly afterwards married the distinguished mathematician, Professor W. K. Clifford.

I met them shortly after their marriage, both brimming over with happiness.

I went abroad, and while there I heard of the death of Professor Clifford, in the prime of life, and in the zenith of his power : an irreparable loss, not only to science, but to all those who knew him.

But what a tragedy for his young wife and two little girls !

Mrs Clifford is a woman full of courage. Though bowed down with grief she resolved to work hard, and she did work most valiantly and successfully. Her husband's friends gathered round her, and their sympathy and encouragement were a great solace to her.

I called upon her on my return from France. The brilliant, joyful expression had gone from her face, sorrow had left its mark. It was pathetic to see the bouquets of flowers lovingly placed by her in front of her beloved husband's portrait, painted by John Collier.

Mrs Clifford had then achieved a great success with her powerful novel, *Mrs Keith's Crime*. Many of her friends and admirers found fault with her for writing such a terrible story. A dying mother, while abroad among strangers, kills her child, who is in precarious health, rather than leave it in the hands of people who might be unkind to it. Macmillan refused to publish it, but George Bentley brought out the novel.

It was enormously discussed. At a large reception



many of the leading literary people were present, as well as Mrs W. K. Clifford. Robert Browning, when he perceived her, rushed towards her, and grasping both her hands, congratulated her on having written such a strong and remarkable novel. The reading of *Mrs Keith's Crime* had engrossed him, and made the deepest impression on the poet.

Mrs Clifford has written many other novels, such as *Aunt Anne*, *The Love Letters of a Worldly Woman*, *Woodside Farm*, etc., etc.

Her *The Likeness of the Night* was performed not long ago at St James's with marked success. It is a strong, admirably-constructed, moving tragedy. Everyone is looking forward to her next drama. In an age when so many twaddly things are successful, women must feel delighted that so strong a play is the work of a woman.

She has two daughters. The eldest, Ethel, is a very picturesque girl, with a great gift for poetry; the second daughter is a nurse at St Bartholomew's.

Mrs Clifford holds a *salon* where most of the scientific and literary people of the day congregate. Here is one of the few houses where one hears good talk. At her Sunday receptions I have met the late Professor Huxley, Tyndall, Herbert Spencer, Leslie Stephen, the Pollocks, Macmillans, Julian Hawthorne, Charles Keary, Mathilde Blind, Sydney Colvin, Maurice Hewlett, and Rudyard Kipling.

## CECIL LAWSON

WE knew Cecil Lawson about the time that he was executing "The Minister's Garden," the picture that brought him fame and fortune. This noble landscape was hung on the line in the Grosvenor Gallery, and produced a remarkable sensation. I was at the Private View ; there was a crowd round the picture. Everybody was making inquiries about the painter. Who was he? How was it that he had hardly ever been heard of before? When he appeared in the Gallery, Cecil Lawson was surrounded, everybody trying to shake hands with him. "How young! Almost a boy!" I heard people exclaiming. He did look a mere boy: he was short, his head was very big, covered with thick, brown curly hair; his smile brilliant; his blue-grey eyes flashed from behind gold-rimmed spectacles. This was his first triumph. He was so excited that he lost his hat, and remained bareheaded in the long crowded gallery receiving congratulations.

"The Minister's Garden" was an original and daring composition: large rows of blue-green cabbage, and a huge wooden spade in the foreground; quantities of hollyhocks, gorgeous in colour; in the distance dreamy blue hills. This grand landscape was purchased on that day by a well-known collector for a large sum.

Another fine picture, "The Hop Gardens of England," which had been rejected the previous year by the Royal Academy, was now in the second year hung on the line. These landscapes placed Cecil Lawson amongst the great English landscape painters.

Before his success he used frequently to come to our house in South Kensington and talk to us about his aims in art; he was then anxious and despondent, for his life was a struggle. As a lad he was poor—had indeed barely sufficient for his art education—but his genius soon asserted itself. He was one of a large family, living in a house close to the one inhabited by Dante Rossetti on the Chelsea Embankment. His father had been a portrait painter. Cecil and his brother Malcolm, who was then strikingly handsome and very musical, were deeply attached to each other. When Cecil was extremely hard up, he sent some of his sketches to a dealer for sale; Malcolm, in order to encourage him, purchased some of these on the sly—on no account was Cecil to know who had bought them.

Cecil had two sisters, both musical; the mother, a kindly woman, painted flower pieces. I have spent several very pleasant evenings in their hospitable house. Theo Marzials, the author of that popular song "Twickenham Ferry," was an *habitué*. Often there was music in the little upstairs studio, on whose walls hung pictures and studies by Cecil Lawson. The young painter would recite for us such poems as Edgar Poe's "Raven," or Browning's "Pied Piper of Hamelin." The latter he recited admirably. I have never heard it better done, except by Clifford Harrison; the change

of voice, gestures, were most dramatic. Sometimes he related to us what he called his dreams, or rather waking visions, revealing a deeply poetical nature. He was enthusiastic about his art, full of schemes for the future, and brimming over with fine artistic conceptions. One day he painted a little sea study before me, and gave it to me. He was genial and most kindly. He married a daughter of Philipps the sculptor, whose sister first married Mr Godwin, then after his death, became the wife of the famous American painter, James Whistler.

Cecil Lawson died of consumption when still a young man in the zenith of his genius and fame. His widow presented to the National Gallery his fine picture, "An Autumn Moon."

## HUBERT HERKOMER, R.A.

It was at Cecil Lawson's house, many years ago, that I first saw Hubert Herkomer. I was there struck with his weird appearance—the very pale, thin face, the dark eyes, the almost blue-black hair and moustache. I recollect remarking that he made me think of Lucifer.

There was something hypnotic and sinister about him then. I was not surprised to hear that he had great mesmeric power, and had performed successfully on many people, curing them of diseases. When I went to see Hubert Herkomer he was living with his first wife, a sweet German lady, older than he was, and in delicate health. They inhabited a pretty little house in Bushey. Mrs Herkomer had two children—both are now married. Besides the Herkomers there were two Welsh lady-helps, sisters. After the death of Mrs Herkomer, the painter married the elder sister. His big mansion at Bushey is named "Lulu Land" in memory of her. After her decease he married his third wife, sister of his second.

His old father, a native of the Austrian Alps, was, in his way, a remarkable man; he was a famous wood-carver, and much of his beautiful work is to be seen in "Lulu Land," Herkomer's mansion. I do not admire the building—it reminds me too much of an old

mediæval castle, and looks out of place in simple Bushey.

Hubert Herkomer is a man of strong will and has great decision of character ; by tremendous work and undoubted talent he has attained a high position. His picture of the "Chelsea Pensioners" made him a celebrity. It was hung on the line in the Royal Academy, was the picture of that year, and was bought by Mr Fry. Before this success, Hubert Herkomer's life was more or less of a struggle ; he painted this large canvas in such a small room that he was unable to have more than one model at a time, and when he screwed up his easel, it went through the skylight. To achieve a well-composed picture under the circumstances was a *tour de force*.



## A HAUNTED ROOM

SOME years ago I went to stay at a country house in order to execute a pastel portrait of a little boy. I knew absolutely nothing at all about Mrs H.'s house or household. I was then in excellent health and spirits. I mention this to show that I was not suffering from nervous depression.

The young and graceful hostess met me at the gates of her park, and, before showing me the room I was to inhabit, she invited me to have tea with her in the boudoir, as I arrived shortly before five o'clock on an autumn afternoon. I was delighted with the situation. The grounds and the charming boudoir, with its choice furniture and Parisian *bibelots*, were so cheery and bright. My little sitter, a fine boy of about six years of age, was present, and looked as if he would be sufficiently quiet, and *pose*, at all events, long enough for me to be able to draw him. When I had finished drinking tea my hostess offered to show me my bedroom, "A long way from this," she added, smiling. "This is the new wing, but it is all occupied, so I have put you in a particular room in the old part of the house, as the view from the window is specially fine. As you are an artist, you must prefer a beautiful outlook to anything else."

I followed my hostess through endless corridors and

sumptuous rooms, denoting wealth and taste. But as we approached that part of the mansion where I was to be located, a sudden and unaccountable depression came over me, which intensified as my hostess opened the door.

We entered a large room with an old-fashioned four-post bed enveloped in dark damask curtains. The furniture was massive and gloomy, with the exception of a cheval glass and a lovely Salviati vase filled with roses.

From the open window the view was a dream of beauty—blue mountains, lovely green slopes, touched here and there by a radiant sunset ; a fine old wood was close at hand.

“It is lovely !” I exclaimed. “But why do I feel so frightened ?” I shuddered so visibly, that my hostess noticed, and asked me if anything was the matter.

“There is something eerie, uncanny, in this room, I feel it keenly. Do not, please, be vexed ; but have you got another room ? ever so small a one will do for me. I confess that I feel there is something terrible in this ; perhaps there is a ghost. What can make me so nervous ?”

My hostess looked hard at me, and her expression was peculiar.

“I should never have thought that you suffered from nerves. You are bloomingly healthy ; but come and see this room.” She opened a door, saying, “It is much smaller.”

I followed her. “This is better,” I answered, “not so uncanny, and the view is just as beautiful,”

peering out of the window, but still feeling a curious depression.

"You can put your dresses in the big room ; this won't be too small," remarked Mrs H. "I daresay that ancient four-post bed strikes you as gloomy. I shall tell the housemaid to prepare this den for you ; meanwhile, take a stroll in the garden ; we don't dine till eight o'clock, nearly two hours from this."

I was glad to get away. The moment I left that part of the house my spirits instantly revived. Then Mrs H. introduced me to the governess, who happened to be in the hall.

Miss Jones was a fine-looking girl, and had a brighter expression than the usual run of governesses.

After a prowling in the garden I asked Miss Jones if the house was haunted.

"Do you, then, believe in spirits or ghosts ?" she asked, her face flushing, but not answering my question.

"That room upstairs certainly makes me think that there are ghosts in it. The minute I stepped inside an unaccountable feeling of terror seized me."

"I know it looks gloomy ; it is that old-fashioned bed and cheval glass ; but don't ask me any questions, I have only been here a short time ; my room is next to the little boy's in the new wing, so I know nothing." She left me, saying that it was time for her to be with her pupil.

The dressing-bell rang. A housemaid came to me, saying that my room was ready, and that she

would show me the way. The mansion was large, and it was easy to take a wrong turning.

The candles were lit ; the smaller room was more cheerful.

“ I have hung your dresses in the next room,” remarked the maid ; “ this is so small. I have lit the lamp there.”

She departed. I took a candle and boldly entered the terrible room (that was my name for it). My dresses were hanging up in the oak *armoire*, in front of the tall cheval glass. I felt so nervous, in such a hurry to get away, that I did not deliberate which gown I should wear, but clutched desperately at something. That something gave way and all my things came down with a thud on the floor. I turned round—there in the glass I beheld a white, drawn face, grinning at me. I screamed, rushed into my little room and bolted the door.

Was I going mad, or were my nerves in a highly overwrought state? I had never in my life, except once in my childhood, experienced this kind of abject terror. I dressed hurriedly, too frightened to consider what dress to put on or how I looked ; I was only anxious to leave this uncanny corner of the big house.

I went downstairs and entered the brilliantly lit drawing-room, where I saw my hostess, arrayed in a bright gold satin gown, white lace and ornaments, sitting chatting to a young girl, who was laughing merrily.

I felt not only relieved, but ashamed of my nervous terrors.

"This is our new visitor, Miss Chalmers," remarked my hostess. "This lady"—addressing the young girl—"has just come from London, and is going to paint my little boy's portrait."

Three men now walked in, attired in evening dress. The host, Mr H., offered me his arm and we entered the dining-room. The rich oak furniture, the amber satin damask curtains, the silver sparkling on the table, and the magnificent sculptured oak cupboards, the glistening, shining, twinkling glass, the fragrant perfume of the orchids and roses in gorgeous Salviati vases, and last, but not least, the flunkeys and solemn butler, dispelled my nervous terrors. It was so bright, so alive, that I was ashamed of the sensations I had experienced in the room upstairs. Mr H. was a keen sportsman, so the talk was chiefly about hunting and local affairs. When the buzz of voices was at its highest pitch I had a little talk with the host, and after praising the beauty of the house and grounds, asked him point-blank if the house was haunted. Before answering, I noticed that the expression of jovial good humour on his face instantly vanished and was replaced by a kind of furtive look.

"I have never seen anything uglier than myself. Surely you don't believe in ghosts? At all events, you don't look like a person whose nerves would be easily upset."

"You must not judge me by my outside; plump, rosy people never inspire any sympathy; still, I happen to be nervous and sensitive to influences."

Instead of answering me he told the butler to pour more champagne in my glass.



“Nothing,” he said, “keeps the spirits off so much as pouring spirits down one’s throat. If you don’t like that room you shall shortly have one in the new part of the building.”

In the evening the pretty girl sang, my hostess accompanied her on the piano, and one of the men played the violin. I remained in the drawing-room till twelve o’clock, and then everybody rose to go to their respective rooms. Mrs H. accompanied me as far as *the room*.

“The servants all sleep just over you ; if you want anything in the night ring the bell. You really dislike this room? In a day or two we can give you one in the new wing. Good-night ! pleasant dreams !”

She left me. I lit all the candles, locked the door communicating with the room which I felt certain was haunted, undressed leisurely, trying to compel myself to feel cheerful, but the creaking of a door, the rustle of the curtains, filled me with apprehension. At last I got into bed. The sheets had the sweet perfume of lavender. On the counterpane I placed a big sponge, a pair of slippers (if anything came into the room I could hurl the sponge and the slippers at it), left the six candles burning, and, tired after my journey, turned my head to the wall and closed my eyes.

I slept for a few hours, but woke with a great start, my heart beating wildly—someone was breathing over me, a cold, indeed icy, breath. I was too terrified to look at it, my face was glued to the pillow. I felt, indeed knew, that in the room was a wicked spirit ; the atmosphere was filled with what the Theosophists call the aura of evil. The clock struck four ; would



the night ever come to an end? Four hours more and the maid would bring me a cup of tea, and the hot water for the bath.

The cold breath ceased. Taking my courage in both my hands, I opened my eyes. I saw that the candles had burned quite low in their sockets. No one visible was there, but an eerie, invisible presence hovered in the room. I felt it in every fibre of my being. Presently, worn out by fatigue, I again went to sleep. When I awoke the housemaid was placing the tea and buttered roll on a table close to my bed.

Though the candles were still burning, my pillow on the floor, my slippers on the bed, I noticed that the neat, prim, well-trained housemaid did not show any sign of surprise. She opened my blind; the sun was shining, birds, singing, and the perfume of flowers filled the little room.

What could that poor spirit, that I felt certain haunted these two rooms, want? Had some past ancestor been murdered there?

When I arrived in the dining-room there were several guests, but as neither my host nor hostess inquired if I had spent a good night I made no remark. Besides, I must endure the ordeal, as there was no other room vacant just then.

That afternoon there was a small garden-party. I happened to meet a couple of ladies—two unmarried sisters—who knew the neighbourhood, and frequently visited the H.'s.

I have often found that the best way to find out a secret is to pretend that one knows all about it. So when I got into a corner of the garden with the Misses

Clark, fixing my eyes on the eldest one, I asked abruptly if she had ever slept in the haunted room?

I saw her give a quick inquiring look at her sister—she was rather a timid woman; the second one had more character, more determination.

“Which room do you sleep in?” she inquired, not answering my question. “Is it the clock room?”

“There is a cuckoo clock close to the room which I am certain is haunted, but I sleep in the little one next to that.”

“Oh! then you are not in the haunted room,” remarked the elder one. “Besides, some people see and feel nothing at all; nervous folk are prone to imagine things, because the room is gloomy.”

“Oh! you know, Mary, how frightened I was when I slept there four years ago,” exclaimed the other. “I could not remain there—I felt an evil presence.”

“Just what I felt the moment I put my foot there,” I said. “Why not speak out frankly?”

“But you are not in *the* room,” remarked the elder one. “I was in there once, and imagined there was some queer *something or other*; but I was not going to give in to nervousness, so willed it away, and it has never come near me since. But I know nothing at all about it; the people keep it dark, and it annoys them to have any reference made to it. Mrs H. always contradicts the reports, or they would have difficulty in keeping servants. I am sure that if you tell your hostess that you don’t sleep well there, she will change your room; someone is leaving in a day or two. I know for a fact that there are many who have slept in

that room without ever being disturbed ; but others have been frightened. You must be sensitive and imaginative ; artists are, as a rule."

The Misses Clark moved away. They evidently did not wish to be further cross-questioned.

That night, to my relief, a young lady visitor who had just arrived from London, was put in, what I firmly believe to be, the haunted room.

"Now," thought I, "I shall know if it is all mere imagination, as I caught sight of a tall, dark, handsome girl entering the cuckoo-clock room, as it was called by the servants.

Though I did feel the evil influence that night, I was so tired that I slumbered, keeping my head well under the bed-clothes.

I woke with a start ; the bell in the next room was being violently pulled ; peal after peal resounded. I was too frightened to move. "She has seen the ghost," I kept murmuring to myself.

I heard the servants upstairs moving, but no one came—they evidently were frightened ; however, after a few minutes, I heard my hostess's cheerful voice calling out, "I am coming, I am coming."

Then there was a silence. My heart was beating wildly. Mrs H. and the young girl passed my door ; they were whispering. She had left the room. I was once more alone with that terrible fiend !

I got up, bathed my face in cold water, opened wide my window and looked out ; it was dawn. Oh ! how beautiful the blue mountains were, touched here and there by a pinkish light.

Nature is so soothing that, drinking in the loveli-

ness and freshness, the feeling of terror gradually disappeared, and a sweet calm entered my being.

I felt certain that this lady would tell me what had alarmed her and me. When I met her at breakfast she looked ill ; there were black rings under her eyes, her face was pale, her mouth quivered.

She went into the garden. I followed her and asked her what had frightened her so much in the night.

"I must have had a nightmare," she answered, blushing, "for I was frightened. It does seem silly, especially so when the sun is shining, but at night I am inclined to be nervous ; however, I am going to sleep in the new wing to-night.

She evidently had been told not to mention anything more.

That night I was also moved into the new part of the house as some guests had left. In this part of the mansion I felt another being—cheerful and well. I could hardly realise that I was the same person who, a few days previously, had been in such a state of terror. I was now able to take the little boy's portrait, which I executed satisfactorily.

Since I left that house I have come across several people who had slept in this particular room, and many of them had had the same weird experience. There is no doubt that the room is haunted by an evil and unhappy spirit. This I certainly believe.

A few months after my weird experience in the haunted room I went to Cambridge to execute some pastel portraits. At the house of Mrs A. Lyttleton I met Professor Sedgwick and Mr Ernest Myers, both so deeply interested in psychical matters. I related my ex-

perience ; they seemed particularly interested, especially Professor Sedgwick, who was most anxious to visit the house, but I could not divulge the name of the place. Professor Sedgwick remarked that if he disguised himself as a plumber, he might perhaps get inside the house and visit the haunted room.

He told me of the immense number of people who had written to him from all parts of the world on supernatural, or rather psychical matters.

Mr Ernest Myers was anxious that I should do a little crystal gazing. So a few weeks later a friend gave us a crystal ball on a glass stand. I gazed often without any sort of result. But one afternoon to my astonishment a series of tiny miniature scenes passed before my eyes. The vision turned out later on to be a true prophecy, a real fact. This was what I saw : a man lying in bed, his head on a pillow, his eyes shut ; he had a pointed beard. The face struck me as resembling that of my brother who happened to be in America. We heard of his death some months later.

Another time gazing in the crystal I distinctly saw Sir Frederick Leighton. He was then fairly well. Shortly afterwards I heard of his death.

These facts may be only coincidences. Though I possess a crystal and have gazed in it hundreds of times, I have seen nothing ; but, naturally, these two singular images deeply impressed me.



## GREAT MEN AT SOCIAL ENTERTAINMENTS

NOWADAYS if English hostesses mean their parties to be successful they have to rely on the professionals—singers, pianoforte players, violinists, reciters—paid talent takes the place of the interchange of ideas. This seems a pity, for one can get excellent music, etc., by going to concerts or theatres, but brilliant talk, witty conversation, fine thoughts finely expressed, are rarely heard, chiefly because they are no longer encouraged; good talk is dying out rapidly. There is any amount of chaff, which more or less debases subjects—sport, scandal, fashions, “bridge,” “ping-pong,” are the favourite topics of conversation; and rooms are crammed with deadly dull, over-dressed people having neither social gifts nor brilliant individuality.

The famous receptions presided over by charming women with social tact, and the power of making their guests talk well, are disappearing. Indeed, anything serious or elevated would be more or less wasted on the Vanity Fair butterflies.

These reflections forced themselves upon me a few years ago at a large reception given by a wealthy American woman at her house in Stanhope Street, Mayfair.

Amongst the guests were Robert Browning, Oliver



Wendell Holmes, the author of *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*, Sir Frederick Leighton, and many other literary and artistic stars. The hostess evidently imagined that she was paying a compliment to the brilliant authors by treating them to a recitation of passages out of their own works.

I shall never forget the look of boredom on Oliver Wendell Holmes's usually bright face when an American girl with a nasal twang recited something out of one of his works. He had lately arrived in London, and I overheard him remark to a neighbour, *sotto voce*, "It is rather hard to cross the Atlantic and have to listen to one of my productions badly rendered." As for Robert Browning he yawned several times, but when the same lady recited his fine poem of "Hervé Riel," the poet quickly disappeared. I followed him into the dining-room where we consoled ourselves with *foie gras* sandwiches and champagne.

"These affairs are dismally dull," remarked Mr Browning. "I dislike recitations, especially when I have to hear anything of mine. It does seem ungrateful, for it is kindly meant, but I should like to have talked to Wendell Holmes or Fred Leighton."

Hostesses are often dense and ignorant as to what really entertains; when great men are their guests why not let them talk to each other and interchange their ideas? It is the same want of knowledge and tact that often makes a small dinner-party a kind of penal servitude for the space of two or three hours. The hostess takes no trouble to go in for the selection of the fittest at her parties; often she will place a brilliant talker between two dismally dull women. How miserable for

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the intellectual beings to be thus wedged in for a couple of hours or so without a thought in common ! Women, as a rule, care more for their bodies than for their minds. Intellectual talk wearies them, so for a man to get on (as the phrase goes) with the weaker sex he has to take refuge in *persiflage* and chaff, or with those who are young he flirts. Of course there are many exceptions to the rule. I think, on the whole, French women talk better, for they have studied the art of conversation and *l'art de plaire* ; but here in England, the average women's talk is not interesting. Good manners and charming conversations are quickly dying out.

## THEODORE WATTS-DUNTON

I FIRST met Mr Watts-Dunton (Dunton, his mother's name, has only lately been added) at our old friend's house, Dr Westland Marston. I had heard of him as being one of the greatest critics of the age, and had read many of his articles in the *Athenæum*. His sonnets attracted the attention of Dante Rossetti; from that period till the day of Rossetti's death a strong friendship existed between Rossetti and Watts-Dunton.

His name is now widely known in England and in America, not only as the author of that fine poem "The Coming of Love" and the "Ballad of the Armada" in *Christmas at the Mermaid*, but by that popular romantic novel, *Alwyn*, which was written many years ago. "Mere missives from the lonely watch-tower of the writer's soul, sent out into the strange and busy battle of the world to find, if possible, another soul or two to whom the watcher was, without knowing it, akin," as the author writes in the preface.

Dante Rossetti figures as D'Arcy in *Alwyn*.

Mr Watts-Dunton visited the gipsies with Borrow, the author of *Romany Rye*, *Lavengro*, *The Bible in Spain*.

The famous gipsy preacher, Smith, a pure-blooded gipsy, now preaches from *Alwyn*, and declares that the

gipsy life depicted there is the best in the English language.

Theodore Watts-Dunton has been the dear friend of the most distinguished literary men of the time—Tennyson, Robert Browning, Matthew Arnold, James Russell Lowell, Lyall, Murchison, William Morris, but especially Dante Rossetti. The great poet Swinburne has made his home with Mr Theodore Watts-Dunton for the last twenty-five years. They live at The Pines, Putney Hill, which leads to Wimbledon Common.

Mr Watts-Dunton is a little below the medium height; he has a fine intellectual head and brow; luminous, soft, dark-green eyes, under black eyebrows. His complexion is healthy; his hair is turning grey; the expression of his face constantly varies; his manner is simple and dignified; when in the vein he is a brilliant talker, but he must be in sympathy with his hearers. When he is at his best is after dinner, sitting by a cheerful fire, smoking a good cigar and imbibing a glass of punch; then he is most delightful. He talks picturesquely, pleasantly and shrewdly about people and books. He has not a tinge of bitterness or envy in his disposition. He endeavours to see the best in everyone, and has helped many a youth in his literary career. It was Mr Watts-Dunton who discovered the talent of young Oliver Maddox Browne, and recommended his novel, *Gabriel Denvers*, to Mr Williams, at Smith Elder's. It was published, but Oliver Maddox Browne unfortunately died shortly after.

*À propos* of Maddox Browne, there is at The Pines,

in Mr Theodore Watts-Dunton's study, a fine portrait of Maddox Browne, painted by himself, which he gave to Mr Watts-Dunton as a token of friendship and gratitude for what he did towards getting his son's novel published. Indeed the study is a museum of treasures. There are many paintings by Rossetti, including a portrait of Mr Watts-Dunton, a portrait of Rhona Boswell, of Sinfa Lovell, of gipsy camps. There is quite a labyrinth of books, drawings and quaint, valuable furniture at The Pines. It is an ideal home for two poets to live in.

## DOCTOR ANNA KINGSFORD AND MR EDWARD MAITLAND

IT was at a meeting in Prince's Hall, Piccadilly, some years ago that I first saw Doctor Anna Kingsford and Mr Maitland. The author of *The Pilgrim and the Shrine*, a book which in its day had considerable success, was then a handsome, elderly man. It was a curious assembly; most of the people there looked as if they had escaped from lunatic asylums—queer, wild folk, dressed eccentrically.

Doctor Anna Kingsford was the most striking person in the hall. She had a tall, fine and graceful figure, and a profusion of golden hair; her features were delicately chiselled, her complexion white (powdered), her eyes, though small, were keen and intelligent. She delivered an address to Isis; it was something between a prayer and an exhortation. Her fluency and eloquence were astounding. Without a moment's hesitation her words poured out; she was an inspired prophetess.

She told me that in a previous existence she had been Joan of Arc, and still had visions.

Anna Kingsford had thoroughly studied medicine, and had taken her degree of M.D. She and Mr Maitland advocated vegetarianism as the only food good for the development of the soul. Meat, they declared, was



the cause of all the brutal passions of humankind. She told us that she was anxious to have a vegetarian banquet, cooked by a French *chef*, in order to show how delicious it could be made, but the banquet never came off. She wrote articles on the toilette, the art of making-up, painting the face, etc., for ladies' journals.

She was a queer mixture of seriousness and frivolity, of sense and nonsense, a kind of prophetess and school-girl, a mass of inconsistencies. At times she was very *exaltée*, quite a seer inspired, at others a frivolous, lively, vain woman. She was married to a clergyman of the Church of England, and had one daughter. The doctrines of the Church did not satisfy her ; she found mysticism more congenial. She and Mr Edward Maitland, who worshipped her, worked together and wrote *The Perfect Way*, a remarkable book. Anna Kingsford had a terror of growing old, but this was spared her, for she died in the prime of life. Mr Maitland survived her only a few years, but long enough to write her life.

This occupation moved and deeply interested him. He told us that when in any difficulty he would call out to her, that she always answered him ; he heard her voice distinctly, and she then made every thing clear and lucid. Several times Mr Maitland declared solemnly that he saw her standing by his side or bending over him ; she was more beautiful than ever, quite happy, and longing for him to join her.

His health gave way after he had finished writing Anna Kingsford's life. He grew weaker and weaker, his mind got confused, his object in living was over—he longed to be with his beloved friend, now that he

had given his message to the world. He died a few years ago.

Anna Kingsford and Mr Maitland might be called the pioneers of modern mysticism ; they were a strange, unique couple. In the *Westminster Gazette*, of January 21, 1902, appeared the following paragraph, headed—

“ A SPIRITUALISTIC SENSATION.

“ A great sensation is said to have been caused in the spiritualistic world of London by a communication received from Edward Maitland and Dr Anna Kingsford announcing that they have changed their opinions on certain points, and particularly on vegetarianism and anti-vivisection, both of which articles of faith, it is reported, they denounce.”

I met several times at Dr Anna Kingsford's Mohini Chatterji who has translated so splendidly from the Sanskrit *The Bhagavad Gîtâ* (or the Lord's Lay). He was a strikingly handsome young Brahmin, with lustrous black eyes, a clear olive skin and long blue-black hair. The cast of the face and expression reminded me of pictures I had seen of Jesus Christ. He spoke perfect English, and was accomplished, eloquent and dignified. He would not shake hands with ladies. “ I never touch a woman's hand,” he exclaimed when after a talk with him I stretched out my hand ; he dared not touch it but he bowed over it. A few ladies now and then attempted to flirt with Mohini, so sometimes he was placed in difficult circumstances.

I also came across the famous Madame Blavatsky

who was then at the head of the Theosophical Society. She was ugly, had a big powerful head, and round staring eyes. The evening I saw her at a friend's house she was smoking cigarettes, evidently fascinating a number of peculiar-looking men and women, who formed a circle round her, swallowing reverently everything the big old prophetess uttered. She was a sharp, clever woman, and certainly influenced a vast number of people, amongst others Mrs Annie Besant, gifted and eloquent, whom one may consider Madame Blavatsky's successor. I have frequently heard her discourse on Theosophy for over an hour at a time, without any hesitation or hitch, every word uttered being the right word—her tone of voice agreeable, the expression of the face fascinating, the eyes serious and thoughtful.

Mrs Besant came to our house a few years ago and gave a discourse in our drawing-room. She wore a kind of white Indian garment, which suited her admirably. She spoke about reincarnation, and is quite certain that we are all preparing here for our next reincarnation—death simply meaning a change into another state.

G. F. WATTS, R.A.

I VISITED the great poet-painter at his studio in Melbury Road, situated at the back of Frederick Leighton's house ; indeed, the two gardens lead into each other. I went with an acquaintance of mine, Mademoiselle Isabella de Madrazzo, sister of the Spanish painter, and sister-in-law of the great painter Fortuny, whose brilliant pictures, exhibited a couple of years ago at the Guildhall, made such a sensation. It was an interesting, also an amusing visit, for Mademoiselle de Madrazzo was eccentric, and spoke broken English.

When Mr Watts appeared he was wearing a long velveteen coat, and a velvet black cap on his head. He looked extremely picturesque, reminding me of Titian. He greeted us cordially.

"Ah !" exclaimed Mademoiselle de Madrazzo, lifting up her hands—it was the first time she had seen Mr Watts—"you look like a Venetian Doog (Doge). I am pleased, for you are better than your painting ; you are cleaner ! Yes, Mr Watts, your complexion is charming," peering at the painter through her long tortoiseshell lorgnette. "When you have such a clean skin yourself, why do you paint not clean ? The skins of your portraits are not always clear and clean, but foggy. Perhaps you

English painters *nevarre* see the sun as we do in Spain."

Her audacity took my breath away. I dared not look at Mr Watts; I was afraid that he would be annoyed. But I was reassured, for he was smiling.

"We do not see the sun as you do in Spain; but do you think this foggy?" pointing to a young girl's portrait he had lately been working at.

"Well," shrugging her shoulders, "not so black, but still it might be cleaner. You see *Nature* through foggy spectacles, but still, Mr Watts, you are *varrie clever*, but you are sad; you must come to Spain and be amused. Now," pointing with her parasol to his great picture of "Love and Death," "it does make me miserable—why mix up the two things? Love is so nice; but Death, it is too horrible; we want to forget there is such a certainty; time enough when it does come. *Mon Dieu!* No, Mr Watts, you English artists are too melancholy. Let me see something with a little joy in it—with some sunshine."

Mr Watts seemed amused and interested. She was so pretty and *piquante*; her remarks had much truth, I thought.

"If you like, Mr Vatt, I shall be your *modèle*. You can do with me what you like, but you cannot make me foggy and *triste*, because I am not."

Then, suddenly looking at him, "Do you know that you are a handsome man? I should like to see you in your nightdress"—hearing us laughing—"Vat did I say? I mean in a white waistcoat and necktie."

"Evening dress," we both ejaculated.



“But you are a man of genius! But the colour is not fresh enough to please me.”

The next time I went to see Mr Watts I went alone, and brought him a study in oils I had lately executed of a Bacchante. He was very kind and encouraging. I never met anyone so modest, yet so full of noble ambitions; living in an atmosphere of great thoughts, almost weighed down by splendid ideals, yet constantly experimenting and trying new methods. He does not, like so many of his *confrères*, work to please the public. He does not try merely to make money, or in any way lower his own high ideal. His portraits, though works of art, do not always please. He intensifies the expressions of thought or sadness in a face, and brings out the soul and the inner nature. He ennobles everything he paints.

I remember Watts saying to me that he was striving for what was noblest and best in art, always having the highest possible ideal in his mind, and ever before his eyes the greatest achievements in execution. “I can fancy,” he exclaimed, “that even Phidias, Michael Angelo, Raphael and Titian, and not only these, but Homer, Dante, Shakespeare and Milton, look over my shoulders and pass judgment. You may suppose, then, that I do not feel very grand, for not to be with these is to be nowhere. I might,” he added, in a somewhat depressed tone of voice, “have done a little better had I been more fortunate over the years so long past that have now become dim in the distance. Most of my best designs were made many, many years ago, but no one among the many who knew of them cared to encourage that kind of thing; building, furnishing, buying china,



and the thousand ways in which wealth and power are ordinarily applied seemed to them better worth while. But for portraiture, I should have been worse off than Haydon! But justice obliges me to feel, and candour to say, that the fault was with me. Had my ability to achieve been anything like on a par with my aspirations, I should, no doubt, have succeeded in interesting the public more in my pictures, and conquered some of the position I have failed to master."

Mr Watts's modesty is what one would expect from a great painter who has noble ideals.

His first wife was the gifted, charming actress, Ellen Terry. She was a mere girl when she married him. The marriage did not turn out happily; they were not suited, so they parted.

Mr. G. F. Watts's second wife was a pupil of his, and their marriage proved most successful. Though getting on to ninety Mr G. F. Watts is still hard at work. He is now engaged on a gigantic piece of sculpture—a huge horse stepping forward, embodying the idea of the conqueror. There is much of the spirit of Michael Angelo in the veteran painter and sculptor's creations.

In an age of undoubted cleverness, of technique, of flash-dash fireworks, one cannot help feeling the deepest admiration and respect for a painter like Mr Watts, who will not be tempted by the love of money or notoriety to swerve from the path he has always pursued—that of keeping to his own high ideal in art.

## ELLEN TERRY

I FIRST met Ellen Terry at W. G. Wills's studio in Fulham Road when I was paying him a visit. Just as I was leaving, the brilliant actress walked in to speak to him on the subject of a play he was writing for her. She had already made a great success in his *Olivia*. She was then still young, full of high spirits and charm. I was so pleased because she shook hands with me !

I never met her privately again till a few years ago, at Rye, Sussex, where I was then residing at a kind of farm boarding house in the Winchelsea Road ; there were several other painters and art students staying there too. Ellen Terry, who had a cottage a couple of miles off at Winchelsea, drove past our boarding house daily. Sometimes Henry Irving sat by her side in the dogcart. We all rushed to the window when she was coming. She generally nodded her golden head, and smiled kindly at us.

"I wonder if we begged Ellen Terry to come and have tea with us here, whether she would condescend to honour us with her presence? If she only would, how delightful it would be!" exclaimed the youngest of our party, an ardent admirer of the famous actress.

So a round-robin of an invitation was despatched to Ellen Terry. A few hours later there was a ring at the door. The servant handed a note addressed to "The

Ladies at the Farm." It was in a big, firm handwriting.

"Miss Ellen Terry's compliments. She would be very happy to have tea with us on the following day, Thursday, at four o'clock, if that would suit us."

"It takes my breath away to think that Ellen Terry will be sitting amongst us to-morrow!" exclaimed the most enthusiastic of our party.

The next day we all worked hard; the ugly furniture in the place was removed, the parlour artistically decorated with wild honeysuckle and masses of roses, the long table laden with fruit, cakes, and flowers.

"I see her golden hair glittering in the sun," cried one of the girls, who, like Sister Anne, was looking out of the window.

"Hurrah! Ellen Terry is coming."

We all rushed to the gate. Ellen Terry called out for some one to hold the pony; nor did she descend till a farm servant arrived. By her side was seated a friend of ours, Anna Nordgren, the famous Swedish artist, who was then lodging at Winchelsea. She was trudging along the road, coming to our reception, when Ellen Terry stopped her pony cart and offered her a seat, which she gladly accepted.

The delightful actress exhibited a huge green umbrella, which she called "Miss Tootsey." She descended lightly, gracefully, and walked up the garden, escorted by the students. She carried a bag and a big brown wicker basket, also a picture, evidently detached from its nail on the wall, to show the students a pencil sketch of Henry Irving in the dress of Dante by the late dramatist, W. G. Wills. "Perhaps you don't

know that he was an artist as well as a writer, but the head-dress spoils the likeness. But you have Henry Irving's portrait!" she exclaimed, smiling, pointing to a chromo of Napoleon. "It is like Irving when he played Napoleon in *Madame Sans Gène*. I hate Napoleon, he was so rude, uncultivated, cruel." Then perceiving a dish of freshly gathered mulberries, Ellen Terry remarked, "Almost my favourite fruit."

She drew off her gloves and lifted her veil, her golden hair clustered round her forehead, a pretty pink colour suffused her cheeks, her blue eyes gave an absolute colouring to the upper part of her face.

Mr Hyde, the well-known black and white artist and illustrator, now came in; he had been invited by the lady who had chiefly organised this little tea-party. Mr Hyde was then staying in the Haunted House, Brede Place.

"Brede Place," exclaimed Ellen Terry, "delightfully weird. Henry Irving offered to give me the house as a birthday present, but I refused, it would take such heaps of money to have it done up as it ought to be—furnished with old tapestries, mediæval furniture, and then the drains!" lifting up her hands, "what a state they must be in!"

Then she plunged into an animated talk on people, books, art, and personal experience.

The appearance of Jack, the retriever, brought dogs on the *tapis*.

"All really nice people care for animals," remarked Ellen Terry. "Henry Irving is so devoted to his dog."

Then she told us about her little animal running all

the way from Southampton to the Lyceum Theatre on their departure from America. "Whenever Henry Irving enters his dressing-room at the theatre, and finds that Flossie is sitting in his chair in front of the looking-glass, rather than disturb the dog he will make up his face standing in a most uncomfortable attitude behind the chair."

She told us that she loved most emotional parts.

"Are you ever nervous, Miss Terry?" inquired one of the students.

A gesture of assent was the answer.

"I used never to be nervous when I was younger ; I felt excited, but nervous, never. Now I get worse and worse every new part I play. I do not fear that I shall not be well received, but I dread the possibility of not being able to really play the part as it should be done. Acting is not like drawing ; you make a line, if it is wrong, you rub it out at once and make another. With acting that is impossible, 'tis done, over, done wrongly, but there is no altering—it must stand. I often feel as if I must cry to the audience, 'Oh, that is wrong, not as I meant it to be ; let me act that part or sentence over again differently.' First nights are always disadvantageous. Then there is a difference in one's moods—one cannot always feel the same. In Portia, which I have acted over eight hundred times, one grows to be like a machine. Where is the spontaneity? American audiences are more exacting than English ones ; they expect one to be always in the mood. English audiences know that there are times when one is different, and they make allowances."

One of us asked if the wonderful facial expressions



of Lucy in "Ravenswood," during the signing of the paper, was really the outcome of the feeling of the moment or produced before a glass.

"The expression was the real outcome of my feeling at the time. Sometimes I feel quite the girl, all the passion of the moment masters me and thrills through me, and makes me act as if I were the heroine of the moment ; at others I merely walk through the play, not attempting the portrayal of emotion I really don't feel."

Asked if she believed more in the critic or in the public for real appreciation and comprehension of a play, Ellen Terry pleaded guilty to believing wholly in the public. She spoke of an old friend who, when she was a young girl, advised her to work hard for seven years, making herself, as it were, the servant of the public. "In any capacity, if you work and study hard in the end, you will win their hearts, and you then do what you like. Foreigners will come and go, but you will be remembered. It has been so."

Speaking of the part of Juliet, she said that she had always desired to play a love piece ; she had studied and read all the commentaries she could find, and knew everything that everybody had said, and on the night she was like a machine—everything was correct, but that was all, there was no love or passion in it ; that came when she forgot all she had read.

Asked if she ever saw the audience, Ellen Terry said, "Never at first, but after a few nights, when I get used to the play, then I begin to look about. That advice about working hard I always give to young girls when I advise them to try the stage, and to many



more I advise never to try. I have managed to keep many from going on the stage."

Ellen Terry asked for her wicker basket, and produced photographs of her daughter and her son. Her daughter she spoke of as a critic of advanced and decided views in every branch of art; her son was going in for drawing. She showed us the photograph of one of her grand-children, a fascinating likeness of the little thing, held in the arms of his bewitching grandmother. The portrait of herself, painted by Sargent, she considered the best thing that had ever been executed.

Winchelsea just suited her as she could not bear being near the sea; the continual wash of the waves irritated and worked on her nerves. From her charm-cottage on Winchelsea Hill, the only house in the place with a grand view, she saw the sea in the distance like a dream. Travelling almost killed her. "When I come down here I don't travel by train; far too common" (smiling brightly). "I drive down, it takes about ten hours, but I spread it over two days. This time I stopped at Sevenoaks—I met my daughter there; we had a glorious meal at the hotel, and they would not take any money for it, because I was Ellen Terry. This, of course, prevents me stopping there again."

She now said that we must send her away, so she bade us all a friendly good-bye, with kindly pressure of the hand, and thanks for our hospitality and welcome, inviting us all to go to Winchelsea the following week.

Attended by the art students, she swept up the path and stepped into her dogcart; then with a wave

of the hand and a good-bye, "hoping to see you all again," she flicked with her whip Tommy the pony, who darted off. The old coachman sprang up behind, and we returned to the house expatiating on the kindness and charms of the most fascinating actress of the day.

A few days after I had a delightful moonlight drive with her. She drove me in from her cottage on Winchelsea Hill to Rye, where I was then staying. There was a bull in a field; when I expressed my terror of the animal, Ellen Terry flicked the beast with her whip and drove away at a wild gallop.

"Nothing I enjoy so much as a mad drive through the fields," Ellen Terry exclaimed, throwing off her hat, in order to allow the wind to toss her golden locks.

I felt as if I was at the Lyceum; there was a big moon, a weird windmill, and long stretches of marshes with ghostly trees and shrubs. If we had had Henry Irving then the scene would be complete.

"He is coming to-morrow," she exclaimed.

On approaching the station she remarked that she was going to pick up her daughter, who was coming to spend a few days at Winchelsea. As we approached the train rushed in; Ellen Terry descended, while I remained in the carriage. At the end of a few minutes she reappeared with a tall, slight, dark girl, her daughter. We shook hands, and then she mounted by the coachman's side on the box.

I recollect that this girl was going to take a part in some play, I believe in one of Ibsen's, and remarked that she thought she was too old for so young a part.

When she mentioned the word "too old," Ellen Terry jumped up in the carriage, and putting her hand on her daughter's shoulder, exclaimed in an excited tone of voice, "Too old—never, never say that again ; it is absurd !" And then turning to me. "Though some people think I am getting too old for some parts, I do not feel old, my heart is young, and *that* keeps me from feeling old. Some people are always thinking about their age ; it seems to paralyse their efforts."

A week later I saw Henry Irving driven by Ellen Terry through the picturesque old Cinque Port of Rye ; this time his grey hair was tossed by the wind and he reminded me of Vanderdecken.

## GLIMPSES OF A FEW MORE GREAT PEOPLE

I MET Mr William Spottiswoode, the great mathematician and printer, at the studio of Sir Frederick Leighton. I was so struck by his fine, intellectual head that I asked him to allow me to do a sketch of him. He consented, and I was invited by Mrs Spottiswoode to spend a few days with them at their charming residence near Sevenoaks.

Mr William Spottiswoode was singularly reserved and silent, but when he spoke, it was always to the point. He seemed the kindest of men ; his wife was a lively, talkative, genial little lady. Their two sons were devoted to their parents. When I was staying with them another great mathematician, Professor Sylvester, was on a visit. He was a short, broad man, with a fine head, grey hair and beard, and a very ruddy complexion. I never met anyone so absent-minded. He used to talk to himself aloud ; two or three times I heard him making remarks about people who happened to be present, utterly oblivious of his surroundings.

One afternoon just as I was going to take a walk, Professor Sylvester handed me an ink-bottle, begging me to drop it in the letter-box (evidently thinking it was a letter) as he was anxious to have an immediate answer.

The next morning he appeared at breakfast without a waistcoat or collar. His absence of mind was so great that we feared he might appear in public *sans culotte* !

His portrait was painted by G. F. Watts and etched by that famous French artist, Monsieur Rajon.

When Rajon came to spend a few days with Mr William Spottiswoode a carriage and a servant were sent to the station for his luggage. To the astonishment and almost horror of the servant Monsieur Rajon appeared carrying a small handbag—that was all his luggage. He wore a tail coat. In France this is the official dress, indicating the highest respect. Frenchmen wear usually tail coats at weddings, funerals and other daylight functions.

Monsieur Rajon, however, brought no other suit with him ; he appeared at every meal in this same tail coat, utterly unconscious that he was doing anything out of the common. He was a very small, thin, delicate man, absorbed in his art.

I went to Mr William Spottiswoode's funeral at Westminster Abbey. It was crowded. There was sincere grief displayed. No wonder he inspired so much affection and respect ; his head and his heart were so equally balanced.

## SWINBURNE

It was at an evening, in dear old Bohemia, that I first saw the great poet Swinburne. He was then talking to Dante Rossetti; the contrast between these great men arrested my attention. Rossetti, dark, mysterious, magnetic; Swinburne, fair, bright-eyed, gesticulating wildly, as if he had quicksilver in his veins. Rossetti had rather a massive figure; Swinburne was slight and small, his big head covered with a forest of tawny hair, which he tossed about wildly. He was overflowing with nervous excitability; his speech was extraordinarily rapid, brilliant. Later on in the evening Mathilde Blind arrived, and the author of *Atalanta in Calydon* and *Songs before Sunrise*—amongst the most remarkable works of the Victorian age—were engrossed in conversation for the rest of the evening.

I never met Swinburne till a couple of years ago at "The Pines," Putney Hill, the joint home of Mr Watts-Dunton and Mr Swinburne. While taking tea with Mr Watts-Dunton, Mr Swinburne appeared. He had just returned from his daily seven-mile walk across his beloved Wimbledon Common. His only exception to that walk is on Sundays, for then it is too crowded.

Swinburne loves seclusion, and is averse from meeting people. He has withdrawn from London literary



society. In the spring and summer he and Mr Watts-Dunton sit and chat in their dear old garden and under the green trees. At the end of the lawn is a statue of the Vatican Venus, a present from Dante Rossetti to Mr Watts-Dunton.

Though older, and much more subdued in manner, Swinburne's eyes are still full of eagerness. His old boyish enthusiasm returned as he showed us his valuable editions. His eyes brightened amazingly when he took out from his shelves curious and rare books. His memory is prodigious. The poet struck me as having a great deal of boyish diffidence, shyness, and a modesty rare in these days of self-advertisement.

## MRS OLIPHANT

PERHAPS I ought not to write anything about this popular authoress, as I only met her once, and that was a good many years ago when I was staying at Eton College.

Mrs Oliphant had large dark eyes, full of vivacity and brightness; her teeth projected too much for beauty; her hair was grey; she looked picturesque sitting in her armchair in the pretty drawing-room. Her talk was full of point; she spoke that day about her writings, and was evidently an indefatigable worker.

She was then sitting to Mr Sandys for a chalk portrait. I remember how she grumbled at the length and number of hours this talented and perhaps over-conscientious draughtsman required her to sit. She declared that he hypnotised her, he stared at her so long and so minutely.

Mrs Oliphant struck me as being rather antagonistically inclined towards the lords of the creation, for I recollect that she made me laugh by remarking that men would be much improved if a good sound whipping was administered to them about once a month.

I wondered if this would improve them!

## LESLIE STEPHEN

I MET Mr Leslie Stephen, now Sir Leslie Stephen, K.C.B., at Mrs W. K. Clifford's house. Not only is he one of the greatest living critics, but he is a fine biographer, whose *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century* is considered quite a classic.

He first married Minnie, the second daughter of William Thackeray. She was shy and reserved, but with people she liked could be amusing, with a dash of satire. It was a happy marriage, but his wife died in childbirth, leaving one daughter. He married a second time, a beautiful widow, Mrs Duckworth. She was extremely admired, and was painted by Burne-Jones, G. F. Watts, R.A., and several other artists. Her mother, Mrs Jackson, was one of five sisters (they were Misses Pattles, all extremely handsome) Lady Somers, Mrs Prinsep, mother of Val Prinsep, R.A., Mrs Cameron, Mrs Dalrymple. Mrs Stephen died a few years ago, leaving several children by her former marriage. Leslie Stephen's appearance—he is tall and thin—always makes me think of Don Quixote.

He draws animals in a delightfully humorous manner, is quite an adept. He also cuts them out in paper with extraordinary accuracy, which amuses children prodigiously. He, like Thackeray, is fond of the little ones.

He used to be a tremendous walker, and was called the shepherd of the Sunday Tramps' Society. The members, mostly literary and scientific men, used to meet at his house on alternate Sundays for long country walks.

But the Sunday Tramps' Society came to an end when Leslie Stephen's health failed after a serious illness. He is, however, a great walker still.

I met the late Professor Huxley once at Mr William Spottiswoode's; his face reminded me of a dog I had liked. He struck me then as being depressed. He exclaimed several times, "A cui bono!" He left on me the impression of a certain despondency. But his face lighted up while speaking of his wife and children. Mrs Huxley is one of the sweetest women I have ever beheld; such a charming, reposeful expression of face. I mentioned to a mutual friend that Professor Huxley seemed rather *triste*, and the answer was, "You should see him in his own house on a Sunday evening; he is then the most genial and happy of men, and the kindest host. On Sunday evenings one met at the Huxleys everybody worth meeting in the London world—science, art, literature, etc., are generally represented. The daughters sang and played the piano. It was a pleasure to watch the Professor's face. He was so radiantly happy."

## ALICE MEYNELL

### POET AND CRITIC

IN an age so totally lacking in form, grace and repose of manner, an age of so much vulgarity and materialism, and perpetual motion typified by bicycles and motor cars, an age of conciseness of speech, typified by telegrams and post-cards, it is soothing and reposeful to pay Mrs Meynell a visit in her artistic drawing-room in Palace Court, filled with flowers, plants, Salviati glass and delicate *objets d'art*, the fitting environment of a woman whose thoughts and life are a living poem. In her presence one feels what the weary traveller in the desert must feel when he comes to an oasis.

Alice Meynell's manner is sweet, gracious, dignified, with just a *souppçon* of austerity. She is tall, slight and graceful. Her dress expresses the keynote of her character, the refinement of mind and soul.

She is, perhaps, a little too silent and aloof at times. In general society her person is present, but her inner self is far away. This attitude gives her a touch of mystery which fascinates many. Her large dark eyes are somewhat mournful, at times melancholy. So is the *timbre* of her voice, which seems to protest against the vulgarity of the world. She is quite *une grande dame*, with a nun-like expression. Such painters as

Philippe de Champagne or Francesca would have been delighted to have had her as a model.

Though affectionate, she does not gush or use extravagant epithets. She is never trivial, and the banalities of ordinary social intercourse evidently bore her. Her character is thoroughly well disciplined. She is an ardent Roman Catholic, and accepts its doctrines and teachings with the unquestioning faith of the little child.

This discipline of spirit is carried out in her life and works. She bears the many worries and perplexities of the world without complaining. She is the mother of seven children, and has been, and is, a great worker. Her fastidiousness, her craving for the right word, makes her literary work not an easy task. She cannot, as Madame de Sévigné says, "*laisser trotter la plume, la bride sur le cou.*" Her pen does not trot, hence the distinction of her style.

Dante Rossetti, Ruskin, Coventry Patmore, Meredith, are among those who have admired Mrs Meynell's writings.



## MARY ROBINSON

MADAME DARMESTETER

IT was at Justin M'Carthy's house in Gower Street that I met Mary Robinson. Her manner then was slightly affected; she had lately written a volume of poems—*A Handful of Honeysuckle*—and a melodious rendering of Euripides into English verse.

She had a sweet, sensitive face, illumined by large, thoughtful, grey eyes. She generally then wore, I recollect, an æsthetic dress of peacock blue, made in a peculiar fashion which suited her. She was attending Greek classes in University College in Gower Street, while I was a pupil at the Slade Art School, so we frequently met. A few years after she wrote *Emily Brontë*; *Marguerite of Angoulême, Queen of Navarre*; *The End of the Middle Ages*, and an *Italian Garden*, which contains some of her finest poetry.

I lost sight of her, but one day, when I was in Paris, hearing that she was married and settled in the Luxembourg Quarter, I went to pay her a visit. I mounted up some flights of stairs and rang a bell; the door was opened, not by the usual *bonne*, in white cap and apron, but, to my surprise, by almost a dwarf, with a shawl round his shoulders. I asked for Madame Darmesteter.

"Yes, my wife is at home ; please walk in," was the answer.

I was amazed ! So this little deformed *savant* was the celebrated James Darmesteter, married to the pretty poetess I used to meet in Gower Street.

But though deformed James Darmesteter had a charming face ; there was a wistful expression in his eyes which reminded me of a dog's—faithful, true, and so intelligent.

The Darmesteters were very popular. They had a literary *salon* ; Renan, Halévy, Cherbulliez, Gaston Paris were constantly at their house. For not only is Madame Darmesteter a poet and a historian, but she is essentially feminine and graceful.

After the death of James Darmesteter, his widow edited his volume of *Critiques et Études Anglais*, writing a fine preface. Her English life of Renan holds a high place ; so does her monograph of Froissart, written in French, for in that language also she is a good stylist.

She has now married Monsieur Duclaux, the famous director of the Pasteur Institute in Paris. Since this second marriage she has published a volume of essays, written in French, under the title of *Grand Ecrivains d'outre Manche*.

## W. Q. ORCHARDSON, R.A.

IF people are supposed to resemble their works, or the works to be like their creator, then I do not know of anyone whose appearance and manner resembles more his own productions than W. Quiller Orchardson, R.A. As a rule, I dislike the word, elegant; especially so since, when travelling in Switzerland some years ago I heard an American lady with a strong accent that could have been cut with a knife, call out to her husband, while looking at the Jungfrau, touched by the pink afterglow of sunset,—

“I say, John,” pointing to the mountain with her parasol, “I guess this is elegant.”

Mr Orchardson's appearance and manner are elegant and distinguished. Though he hails from the north of the Tweed, he looks foreign; somewhat like a Spanish Hidalgo—tall and slight. He is always carefully dressed, and has a courtly and genial manner, reminding me of one of the *grand seigneurs* in his pictures. Though he is very Scotch, he is not “damned Scotch.” (Sydney Smith divided the Scotch people into The Scotch and the Damned Scotch.) Mr Orchardson's speech has a strong intonation of his native dialect; he is a delightful talker, especially when he gets on his two favourite themes—painting and fishing. Refinement is the keynote of his character; he

abhors scandal, and one never hears him utter a word of disparagement about his brothers of the brush. Mrs Orchardson is the ideal of a companionable wife ; she reads aloud to her husband in the studio when he is painting. They have six children ; the eldest son is an artist.

When I first met Mr Orchardson, he was playing the famous game of tennis—not lawn tennis—in the pent-roofed courts (the old *Jeu de Paume*), at his place at Westgate-on-Sea, where he had one of the few tennis courts in England. John Pettie, R.A., another famous Scotch painter, was also playing. It was a beautiful summer afternoon. We had tea in the garden, and afterwards went up to the studio. He was then engaged in painting his celebrated picture of a reception at Madame Recamier's. In the picture all but two of the figures were men. Mr Orchardson had painted Madame Recamier from a beautiful woman. Prince Talleyrand and the distinguished guests were all there, with the exception of the authoress of *Corinne*. He asked me to *pose* for Madame de Staël ; he said he could not find a professional model with the intelligent, vivacious expression required.

So I sat for him, in a pale-blue satin *Empire* gown, very *décolletée*, with short sleeves. On my head I had a thick, brown, curly wig, with white feathers sticking up high. I was supposed to be having a discussion with Talleyrand. Mr Orchardson, while painting, kept up an animated discussion with me. I thoroughly enjoyed the long sitting. I never beheld anyone so happy as he was while at work, he so enjoyed painting ; and he worked with facility, he never

hesitated ; there was magic in his touch, his colour sang joyfully.

This picture was one of his great successes at the Royal Academy ; and I am pleased to record the fact that Madame de Staël was considered by art connoisseurs as one of the best realised figures in the production ; she was so much alive. The picture is now in the possession of Sir John Aird, M.P.

Mr Orchardson is a Conservative, and in this late war with the Boers he entirely agreed with Mr Chamberlain, whom he considers the greatest statesman since Pitt. Mr Orchardson is very well informed. When he was at work on his picture of " Napoleon on Board the *Bellerophon* " he devoured every book on Napoleon he could get hold of. He never begins a picture until he has read every work on the subject.

His magnificent studio in Portland Place is filled with *Empire* furniture and *articles de vertu*. He is an artist in his life, and loves to be surrounded by choice pictures and ornaments. His strong personality is not influenced by criticism, so often ignorant and flippant.

Quite recently he was engaged painting a picture—"The Four Generations !" Her late Majesty the Queen, the then Prince of Wales, the Duke of York and the little Prince—for the Royal Agricultural Society in Hanover Square. He asked me to give him sittings for Her late Majesty's hands, when the Queen was younger—her hands resembled mine, which are plump, dimpled, and small.

The late Queen was at that time feeble and out of health ; so that when the painter went to Windsor Castle, he was only able to get one sitting from Her

late Majesty. She is represented seated in the corridor, which was then the place she preferred, close to a table upon which is placed her despatch box, etc., etc. Her Majesty's eyes are fixed on the little Prince, her great-grand-child, who approaches her with a large bouquet of roses.

Mr Orchardson got a loan of the Queen's loose black silk bodice, V-shaped, edged with a narrow frill of white chiffon. He told me that he had some difficulty in procuring this royal garment : nobody had the courage to ask for it, but as it was of the utmost necessity, absolutely necessary that he should get it, he took his courage in both hands (as the French say) and asked Her late Majesty to lend it to him. She graciously granted his request. It was delivered next day by a royal messenger at the studio in Portland Place.

I wore this queenly bodice, almost pathetic because of its utter simplicity. In my hand I held a little fan. While sitting in borrowed plumes on the sham throne—a gilt chair—for the time being I imagined myself the Queen !



## GERTRUDE ATHERTON

I FIRST met this very clever novel writer about twelve or fourteen years ago at Lady Wilde's house. Mrs Atherton is a Californian, a widow, with one married daughter, settled in America. She is still very handsome, extremely fair, but her eyes and eyebrows are very dark. She dresses well. Her manner is vivacious and cordial ; she is very kindly—a good comrade, with a tinge of Bohemianism ; a loyal friend, but she lacks tenderness. Her art is her first consideration ; she is a great worker. She declares that she cannot write two books in the same place, so she is constantly on the move. One hears of her writing novels either at Bushey, Bruges, Brittany, New York, Washington, London, or Denmark. There is no mystery or aloofness in her composition. She is frank, brilliant, incisive.

She is most anxious to excel. Certainly her novels improve in workmanship and interest ; and she is taking a foremost place amongst American fiction writers. Her last work, *The Conqueror*, being the true and romantic story of Alexander Hamilton, is a great advance. Personally I like her previous novel, *Senator North*, best of all.

## A PEEP INTO THE PROMISED LAND, ITALY

NEVER can I forget the intense delight I felt after crossing the glorious Mount St Gothard, to find that I was in my promised land for the first time in my life—in Italy! The golden sunlight was of a different quality to what I was accustomed to, especially in England ; it was, as the shopkeepers express it, the pure and unadulterated article. How I enjoyed skirting the lovely lakes—Maggiore, Lugano, Como—but it was tantalising not to be able to get out and have a row on the water. Then how entrancing to get the first glimpse of Milan Cathedral, looking like exquisite lace-work, by moonlight.

The next morning I spent several hours in Milan, visiting the churches. Late in the afternoon I was off by train again, and had a glorious view of Lago di Garda, a harmony in different shades of blue.

I reached Vicenza in the evening, and there Pen Browning met me, and we walked through the city of grand white palaces, glimmering mysteriously in the starlight. We had a hurried supper and Chianti wine, then off in another train for, I think, Treviso, at Castel-Franco, Giorgione's birthplace. We stopped there. In the darkness we entered an open carriage, drawn by two white horses, drove on to Asolo.

I should like to linger a moment longer at Asolo, that quaint hill town, older than Rome. The little city is dominated by the ruined dwelling of Catherine Cornaro, the dethroned queen of Cyprus, who, centuries ago, was forced to exchange her kingdom for this small domain. There she held a tiny court with Bembo, her secretary, afterwards made a Cardinal. Browning, in a letter to a friend, writes :—

“Bembo has commemorated the fact in his dialogues, inspired by the place, and I do assure you, that after some experience of beautiful sights in Italy and elsewhere, I know nothing comparable to the view from the Queen’s Tower and palace at Asolo.”

Much of Robert Browning’s last volume, *Asolando*, published on the day of his death, was written here. It was dedicated to his great friend Mrs Bronson, whose charming house, “La Mura,” is niched in an antique tower of the fortifications that still partly surround the small city. Browning and his sister Sarianna lodged in a queer old house belonging to Signora Nina Tabacchi in the *Sotto Portici*, thus called because it is formed by a series of arches which support the upper stories. A tablet placed on the wall of this house bears this inscription : “Somma Poeta, who wrote here his last work, ‘Asolando.’” The Brownings breakfasted and lunched at Nina Tabacchi’s. She is a very garrulous dame, who now keeps the only linen draper’s shop in Asolo. Every morning the poet and his sister took long walks, and then Browning returned and worked for a couple of hours.

The remainder of the day and evening were spent with Mrs Bronson. They drove all over the surround-

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ing country, to Possagno, Canova's birthplace; to Bassano, famous because of Napoleon's battle; to San Zenone, and other memorable sites. When I called upon Mrs Bronson and saw the indescribably lovely view, I quite understood the poet spending so many hours, as she told me he did, pacing up and down the spacious loggia and being always there to watch the superb sunsets. "My very own of all Italian cities! My first love," Browning writes to a friend from Asolo.

It was the first Italian town into which he had set foot fifty years previously — the Asolo of "Pippa Passes" and "Sordello."

The one thing in which Browning was disappointed, when he returned after so many years to the hill towns, was to find that the silk industry, with all the young girls engaged in it, had left the place, and been transported to Cornuda, nearer the railway, and that all the charming Pippas had vanished. In a manner they have returned to Asolo now, for his son Pen has established a lace school, and from twenty to thirty young girls gather there to make beautiful lace, under the supervision of an excellent mistress. The school is situated in a most picturesque spot, and its windows command a splendid view. On a late afternoon when I visited the school with Pen Browning, a grand sunset illuminated mountains and plains with crimson glow. The day's work was done, and the pretty girls danced out and up the hilly, mediæval street, singing and laughing. The Asoleans are a kindly people, but they have big feuds amongst themselves — and one almost fancies that one is in the Middle Ages.

Robert Browning had a great wish to possess a large house in Asolo, which he intended to christen "Pippa's Tower." His offer to purchase was made through his kind friend Mrs Bronson to Count Lore-dano ; the latter's personal assent was secured, but the town council was on the eve of re-election, so no important business could be transacted just then. When the proposal came before the authorities, the decision was in the poet's favour, but it was too late, for Browning had just died at the Palazzo Rezzonico in Venice—a place so loved by Robert Browning. It was past midnight when we reached Casa Browning. There I was greeted by our dear friend Sarianna, the poet's sister, looking of course much older, now long past eighty, but still full of vitality. Next morning to wake and find the real Italian sunshine pouring into the large bedroom, and to see from the window the Alps, the blue Asolean hills on all sides—to hear the Italian maid exclaim, "*Acqua calda, Signorina*" in a pleasant voice—to behold Miss Browning sitting in a charming dining-room lined with handsome bookcases, the walls hung round with autotypes from the masterpieces of Italian art ; bronze and brass lamps and ornaments on all sides ; luscious grapes and figs on the table ; to get a peep of the castle once inhabited by the exiled queen of Cyprus ; to watch a cart with bullocks coming down the hill. It was like a dream.

After breakfast I went with Miss Browning to the Torricella on a high hill, where Pen has built a magnificent studio, standing in a typical Italian garden, with lizards basking in the late autumn sunshine, then to behold an unforgettable panorama. The Alps, the



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Enganean hills so loved by Shelley, the distant peaks of the Dolomites, and the Veneto plains, Padua and Venice in the far distance. On all sides Rivas filled with vineyards; the quaint old market place of Asolo, where everything is sold from cocks, hens and pigs, to hats and dresses. It was an ever-changing kaleidoscope.

I should like to describe the menagerie of pets, birds, beasts—even reptiles—for the Brownings loved all animals; peacocks, cockatoos, monkeys, etc., but I must hurry on. I spent a day and night at Padua, then on to Venice. It was a curious sensation, the approach by train. I saw nothing from the window but clouds and endess water, a symphony of exquisite pearly grey. The train stopped, and then I beheld for the first time a gondola—a gondola waiting for me. In it was seated Mrs Moscheles, the wife of the painter Felix Moscheles, who is godson of Mendelssohn. It was again like a living dream to be gliding down the Grand Canal and see all those famous palaces.

The Brownings had offered me the Palazzo Rezzonico. They were not living there then, and as it is as big as the London Reform Club, the size and the emptiness did not tempt me, so I preferred going to the Hotel Beau Rivage, on the River Degli Schiavoni, where my friends, the Montalbas, had kindly taken rooms for me. *À propos* of Clara Montalba, her pictures of Venice are the best modern works I have ever seen; she renders so admirably the life and movement of that unique city.

I have not the gift of words to describe the



exquisite beauty of the place ; the festival of colour, the ever-varying tints of sky and water. As a rule I am not an early riser, but while staying in Venice I watched many mornings the sun rise over the lagoons—I tried with my pastels to render the brilliant carnival of tints, but my efforts were far from the wonderful reality. The gondolas laden with fruit and vegetables, glittering in the sun, are indescribably gorgeous ; nobody can realise what colour is till one has been in Venice, and then the moonlight on the water and the Venetian singing is all magical. When I think of the thousands of people in the world who wallow in wealth and don't know how to spend their money, and suffer from indigestion, gout and *ennui*, when one knows of the hundreds of art students, poor painters and writers who long to travel, to whom a little of the superfluous wealth would be a boon, a help in their various studies, one wonders that some millionaire does not come forward in order to make travelling more easy. I for one never could afford to see Italy till I was in middle life, almost too late ; if I could have gone in my youth I feel certain that a stay in Italy of a year or so would have been of the greatest service, would have inspired me and made me work with delight, and I should probably have become a fine painter. But the constant necessity of pot-boiling is death to the creation of works of art : an artist ought not to be worried about money.

## MR RICHARD WHITEING

AUTHOR OF "THE ISLAND," "NO 5 JOHN STREET,"  
ETC.

THE two male literary celebrities I have known most intimately are W. G. Wills, the dramatist, and Richard Whiteing, author of *The Island*, *No 5 John Street*, and *The Yellow Van*; and if one searched the world over it would not be possible to find two greater contrasts, morally, and mentally, and physically. W. G. Wills was the embodiment of Bohemianism, brimful of generosity and geniality—of *bonhomie*—but he lived in a state of hugger-mugger impossible to exaggerate and difficult to realise. He never, by any chance, recollected an engagement (he even forgot that he was engaged to be married!); he would never know the time, nor the seasons of the year; in fact, he never knew where he was. He lived in a hugger-mugger dream.

Mr Richard Whiteing is the robust embodiment of order, reliability, punctuality, even punctiliousness. He leads a comfortable, strictly-ordered life, his days are mapped out like a tale that is told—so many hours for work, for exercise, for social duties. He has the qualities that make England respected and feared. W.

G. Wills had the faults that make Ireland loved and pitied.

It is always difficult to write sincerely about the living ; especially so is this the case when one knows them so well. Mr Whiteing is a man of many moods ; he is emotional, excitable, but as a rule he is very jocular and sees life through whimsical spectacles ; strange contrasts and class inequalities interest him far more than politics or even literature.

But though fond of *persiflage*, he can be terribly intense ; he never glides over a topic, but threshes it out completely ; from the gravest to the gayest he never leaves a subject till there is nothing more to be said about it. He does not follow the advice of a witty Frenchman, "*Glissez mortel n'appuyez pas.*" He loves to talk, and at times he is brilliant ; but he cannot always bear opposition ; down he sometimes comes with the force of a sledge-hammer. There are two distinct selves in him, which seem to rage against each other, causing a species of civil war. In fact, his character is a mixture of queer contrasts. The big troubles of life he bears with Olympian calm, but the trifles, the small worries of life, upset his equanimity to a degree which is remarkable. As a rule, he is very kindly and helpful ; most anxious to conform to all the polite conventionalities of social life ; careful to answer letters, to pay visits—as the French say so neatly, *visites de digestion*. He goes to weddings and funerals. He sends wreaths for the departed, and so on.

Mr Whiteing's appearance is striking ; his head (not unlike Victor Hugo's) is leonine, his hair and beard are white, his skin is sallow, his features are

rugged ; the dark eyes express keen intelligence, kindness and irritability ; his voice is pleasant, his address courteous. He prefers the society of gentle, sensitive women to that of men. He will not be domineered over, even by the game of chess. Though he now plays chess with a typical regularity, the game at one time was a kind of obsession and interfered with his reading. Chess had become a tyrant, he could not endure to be interrupted whilst playing it, so one day at the sea-side he threw a fine set of chessmen, board and all, into the ocean. But the fever again came over him. He purchased new chessmen, and every evening played with as much ardour as ever.

This time he buried the set in the garden ; there it remained for a long time ; but again he fell under the old infatuation, and then he dug up the chessmen and played as much as ever. However, he had a very serious illness, and chess caused him sleepless nights. Then he made a stern resolve never more on any consideration to play the game. So one afternoon, much to my amusement, I saw him standing in front of the fire, throwing the chessmen into the flames ; they sputtered and seemed to protest ; they were certainly not guilty, but this time Mr Whiteing was inflexible, for anything that really stands in his way he would abolish. If he were at the head of affairs he would quench rebellion with a strong hand. Though socialistic in his sympathies, at heart he is an Imperialist.

His tastes are refined, and he is pathetically dependent on gentle, sympathetic companionship. He can be most genial, amusing and charming when the spirit to be so is over him ; certainly his personality is as full

of contrasts as the social problems he writes about with so much power and humour—it is so full of marked contradictions.

Though his great success in literature has come rather late in life, it is well deserved. For thirty years he was a successful journalist, but the enormous popularity of *No. 5 John Street* has enabled him to give up writing for the daily press.

His new novel, *The Yellow Van*, is to appear serially in the *Century* at the end of this year.

Mr Whiteing lives in a peaceful, old-fashioned square in Bloomsbury, and divides his time between London and a cottage in Hertfordshire.



## THE CORONATION OF KING EDWARD VII. AND QUEEN ALEXANDRA

I ONLY saw the State Procession, not the Coronation Service at Westminster Abbey, but I witnessed that to perfection from Lord and Lady Rothschild's mansion in Piccadilly (I was invited through the kindness of an acquaintance). I suppose that the uncertainty as to whether the King was really sufficiently recovered after his dangerous illness to go through the coronation service, and the time of the year (August), when most people are out of town, was the cause of the non-crowding of the streets. The entrance to Lord Rothschild's house, on that eventful morning, was at the back—in Hamilton Gardens, next to Apsley House. It was a grey, dull day ; I walked from Bloomsbury to Hyde Park without feeling any inconvenience, and reached the gate at a quarter to ten, but nobody was admitted into the house till ten o'clock. The *invites* prowled in the garden. There I met Lady Lindsay (of Balcarres), a gifted woman, who not only paints, but is a poet as well. She told me that she was bringing out another volume of poems. At ten o'clock the gate was opened ; some gorgeous flunkies in blue velvet livery, relieved here and there with yellow, stood at the door ; a personage in black examined the tickets. There was a very big stand, draped in red, erected in front of the mansion, with pillars draped in crimson velvet edged with ermine, surmounted by crowns. I



had an excellent seat and was fortunate to have for my neighbours a distinguished painter and his wife; we talked on art matters, so the five hours passed pleasantly. Now and then we refreshed our inner selves with the delicious fare and wines provided for the fortunate guests, which was laid out in the magnificent dining-room.

It was about three o'clock when the brilliant procession passed the house. What a fairy scene! especially that gorgeous gold coach, drawn by the exquisite cream horses. Inside, the genial King wearing his crown—looking pale, but better than was expected after his critical illness—and the Queen! a vision of loveliness, glittering all over with jewels. I felt a child again, and expected fairies and genii with wonderful lamps to appear suddenly before me. Then those splendid Orientals with their grave, dignified demeanour, and handsome, chiselled features, and lustrous black eyes, and masses of blue-black hair; as for their gorgeous garments and trappings, only a Giorgione, Tintoretto, Titian could have found colours on their palettes to render the carnival of magnificent tints. The Colonials were also striking; but when the British soldiers passed I heard some shop-girls exclaim aloud, "You ought to be ashamed, you Tommies. You look nothing near the Darkies. No you don't, there!"

The only item which was left out of the State Procession was His Majesty the Sun—conspicuous by his absence. Evidently the luminary had a bad cold and was enveloped in a flannel blanket.

Now the King and Queen are back at Buckingham Palace. God bless them!

## CONCLUSION

I HAVE NOW written more than enough for the regulation volume ; so for the present, a truce to Celebrities ! There is one merit in this record of my life, *i.e.*, sincerity. I have invented nothing. It is all true. Children often ask when one reads or tells them a story, "But did it really happen?" Everything in this book has really happened.

I am afraid that many of the celebrities will not be quite satisfied with my remarks, and will think that I have not said enough ; but my impressions may interest some readers who have not happened to meet these famous folks. Except in peculiar moments of illumination, celebrities have the same human weaknesses as ordinary mortals ; in many cases these failings are more conspicuous, for as a rule men and women of genius lack balance of mind.

Now, I would not go across the street to meet a celebrity of any kind. *Basta!* (as the Italians say) Enough!

Animals delight me far more than illustrious people, because they are not self-conscious, are amusing, easily satisfied and faithful. I believe if there is a heaven (a great many people are quite certain of this) that it will be crowded with beasts, especially poor old cart and omnibus horses who have worked

valiantly and uncomplainingly in this world. I fancy there will be a number of failures there, *i.e.*, people who have not succeeded in anything, but who have qualities of the heart—the pure in heart. I do not think that the fortunate inhabitants of this old planet, who have had everything that makes life happy, ought to have another good time when their hour comes to leave this world. It does not seem fair. I do not entirely agree with Becky Sharp, that it is easy to be good with £10,000 a year, but it must be a help.

THE END

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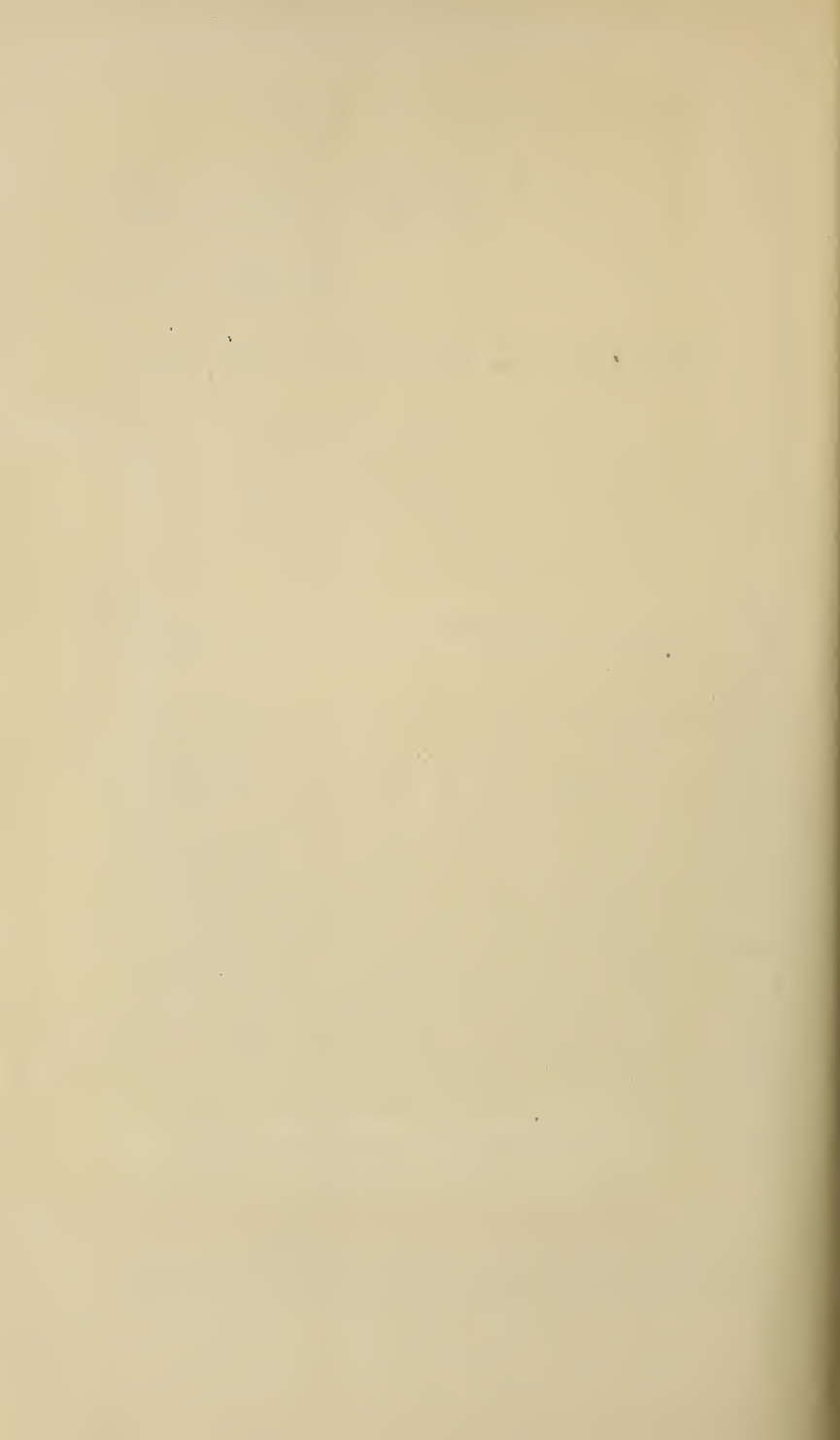
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